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JOHN AND MARTHA DANIELS











ON THE  
PROPER CONDITION  
FOR  
ALL HORSES.













Augustus Butler, lith.

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A TREATISE  
ON THE  
PROPER CONDITION  
FOR  
ALL HORSES.

BY HARRY HIEOVER,  
AUTHOR OF  
"TABLE TALK AND STABLE TALK," "THE HUNTING FIELD,"  
"THE POCKET AND THE STUD," &c.

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## P R E F A C E.

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I AM quite aware that a work on Condition appeared many years since, most copiously and ably written by Mr. APPERLY, the “Nimrod,” as a writer, of his day. To shew that I in no way conceive I can write better on the subject than that author has done, it will be found that I shall say but little on such parts of it as relate to Hunters, that he has so fully entered on; but it will be remembered by those who have read the work alluded to, and I beg to remark to those who have not, that Mr. APPERLY confined himself to treating on the Condition of Hunters only, a part of Stable Management that I consider is, in these days, more generally well



performed, than is the same management as regards other horses, for men, keeping a stud of Hunters usually have such persons engaged in the care of them, as insures their being brought into the field in the best possible condition ; and the pace hounds now go is such, that each master of a stud is quite aware that unless his horses are in such high state of condition, they cannot carry him where, and as, a forward rider would wish to be seen by his brother sportsmen. The groom is equally aware, that unless his horses are in such state, his master cannot keep his place in the field, which leads to no vague suspicion, that under such failure of the horses, the groom will not long keep his place in the establishment. Thus, where emulation, vanity, pleasure, and interest combine to achieve a certain point, it rarely happens that it is not reached ; and when horses are once brought out quite up to the mark in stamina and wind, good grooming, liberal feeding, proper warmth, and fast work, (barring accident,) usually keeps them so.

But it must be remembered, or rather ob-



served, that every man does not keep a stud of Hunters, or any Hunter, and it is quite as desirable that horses for other work should be in as proper condition to perform their duties as should be the Hunter ; and I think I may fearlessly assert, that keeping a carriage or brougham, or a couple of hacks, or all of them, does not, as with the stud of Hunters, ensure their being under efficient stablemen, or owning a master being himself a judge of what really is the proper condition for his horses to be in, and probably still less of the means to be used to bring them to, and keep them in such state, as will tend to their doing their business well, with ease to themselves, and, consequently, with satisfaction and credit to their owners.

I therefore propose to venture my opinions on the proper condition of horses for *all* purposes, from the Race-horse to the one who draws home the hay and oats for his more aristocratic labourer, in the service and pleasure of his master.

Should my practical experience, and the opinions emanating from it, on the Condition of Horses, tend to also place their masters in a con-



dition to be well served, my time will have been well employed ; should my opinions not be approved of, or, if acted upon, should they not be found to answer the intended purpose, I trust the worst that can happen, will be that master and horse will be about in the same condition as each were before this book was written.

I think it by no means improbable that some persons may consider I have dilated more than necessary on the subject of Race-horses ; but it must be borne in mind, that each person is apt to think too much is said on any subject, if such subject or object does not interest his mind or feelings. So some may think that what I have said about Cart-horses is a matter that might have been well omitted ; either of such critics would, however, lose sight of the intent of the book, which is a treatise on “ the Proper Condition for ALL Horses.”

But I had a further motive in treating to the extent I have on Race-horses, than considering them as one of the different classes of the animal, which is this :—the training a Race-horse, when the subject is stripped of its usual mystification,



is really nothing more than bringing a horse to the highest pitch of Condition the animal can be brought to. The bringing any horse into Proper Condition for any fast work, is training in a modified degree ; but the Condition of the Race-horse is the *Ne plus ultra* of condition. I have taken the system adopted with him as the model we are to imitate in a lesser degree with all others, and by shewing the time, trouble, expense and judgment required in, and the importance attached to bringing him out in proper condition for what we require from him, I have hoped to prove that proper condition is equally important to all horses, if we expect them to perform their duties in a satisfactory way. I should have held it arrogant in me to expect readers to be convinced of this, merely because I gave it as an opinion that it is so, but by shewing that men owning, and those training the most valuable horses we know of, are aware that, without the most perfect state of condition, such horses cannot compete with inferior animals better prepared, it will I hope, first, account for devoting the pages I have to Racing matter ; and secondly, go



far to prove that the subject of this book is one of the highest importance, though I may not perhaps have brought it out in as "proper condition" as I could have wished.



## REMARKS ON THE PLATES.

It may be very properly remarked, that any pictorial illustration of any subject or object should explain itself. I venture a hope that the two sketches I made for this book may do this, if looked at by those initiated in the extraordinary difference that exists, in point of appearance, by the same animal, in two opposite states of condition; but those little conversant with such matters (and it is chiefly, if not wholly, for such the book is written) may not possibly be able to detect how and where this arises without some little explanation. I judge by analogy.

Little as I know of nautical matters, I really do know a schooner-rigged vessel from a cutter; but if two sketches were shown me of two schooners, or two cutters—the one stylishly rigged, the other rigged in



a slovenly manner—I might look till doomsday before I could detect the merits or demerits of each: hence my motive for explaining the two engravings.

“Fit to show” and “Fit to go.” “Yes,” some reader may say, “but they are different horses.” “Excuse me,” I should reply, “the horses are the same: there is the same anatomical proportions; but in the first, all is hid by a mass of useless fat. There is the same fine long wither and oblique shoulder, but both are lost by being run into a neck loaded with flesh. Of muscle there is no indication; how should there be, when the shape of each muscle is buried under a load of flesh? Some may think the first shows more spirit than the other quiet-looking animal: he does, so far as dancing about in the false spirit of idleness, and from having had a few “private shows,” when only the dealer and his men were present, who, knowing the great majority of their customers are not judges of horses, very wisely gives his horses a few private hints as to their manners, when shown out for sale. To use a technical term, “what a flag he carries;” he does,



for *hidden reasons*, the effect of which any customer may try in any way he pleases. To put a horse in such state to anything in the shape of exertion, would probably be death to him.

As regards appearance, he is a fine-shaped horse disguised; in fact, merely looks a good sort of Yorkshire Harness-horse. But let us now turn to Sketch No. 2.

Here we have the same horse, but scarcely looking the same animal: even his colour (though the engraving cannot show that) is altered by Condition. We may, by his appearance, suppose him to have been eighteen months under the management of a superior stud groom, and in the middle of his first season of regular hunting. Here we see what was beneath the mass of flesh under which he laboured when a four or five years' old, fresh from the breeder. Here his neck is shown finely set on; the long sweep of his wither is before us, his shoulders, before perfectly beefy, now exhibit obliquity in shape, and bespeak liberty of action; his long and muscular hind quarters show he is of aristocratic family; his quan-



tum of flesh is just what would enable him to keep his pace in a fast country, even were it with "the 'Squire's Flying Ladies," of never-dying memory. He does not show foolish and mere idle display of false fire, but there is determination in his eye and countenance: he looks willing, and, as far as my judgment serves me, he looks also "Fit to go."



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ER IN HORSE





ON THE  
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THERE was a time when the term *condition* would have been as mystic as any term used in the incantations of those witches, necromancers, or wise people that the greatest of warriors did not feel it beneath their dignity to consult, and even suffered their auguries to elate or depress the hope of victory. The Egyptians, those early patrons of the turf, though they certainly did in some measure prepare their coursers for the trysting field, knew little more of condition than they did of steam transit: and I suspect (to jump over centuries) Sir Roger de Coverly,



though he hunted, knew little more of condition than did those who trusted more to the sharpness of the spiked balls hung to their racers' sides than they did to his fitness for the course he was destined to contend on. It is now among sportsmen perfectly understood, yet there are many even now to whom the term would be as little definite as I presume it would have been to the worthy knight. To such then I will endeavour to render it at once explicit. "Condition" means perfect fitness in health, strength, wind and activity for the task the animal is called upon to perform; the necessary amount of each or all combined depending on the nature of the feat to be performed. This, I trust, suffices to explain to the least initiated what is meant by the technical term *condition*.

Whatever may be said, sung, or written, on any subject, there is always to be found, as is said in the play of *The Good-natured Man*, "some d—— good-natured friend" to cavil at it, contradict it, and sometimes fight one inch by inch, even after conviction returning to the charge with a pertinacity worthy



a better cause. Yet I do not think I shall be contradicted in this premise; namely, that before a horse can be got into condition he must be more or less broke, and before he can be broken he must be absolutely bred. This I believe no one will deny; if any one could be found to do so, it would be a witness I once saw examined in Ireland. The identity and presence of a culprit was wished to be proved. The witness was asked—

Q. You were with Mick Doolan, at the Flying Horse, on Saturday, you know?

W. Devil a know I knows your honer.

Q. Why you saw him there?

W. I did nat your honer.

Q. Why he stood at the table before your eyes?

W. May be so your honer.

Q. Then how can you say you did not see him? take care what you say.

W. Many thanks your worship, I'll do that same.

Q. Then how can you swear you did not see a man standing before you?

W. Plase yere honer its but one eye I have at all,



and I'm 'flicted with a tear in the other, so at times I can't see a man from a milestone.

Q. But you heard Tim Sullivan talking to Doolan and calling him by name?

W. And wat if I did? sure, there's plenty of Doolans in Ireland, yer honer. I didn't see the man, and I can't swear to him; and the more you ask me, the more I won't.

Q. You may stand down!

W. Long life to yer honer!

I will suppose, however—nay, conclude—that I have not so imperturbable a person in my reader as the witness just mentioned, and that he admits a horse must be bred and broke before he can be got into condition. I will first allude to the Breeding. On this subject I may perhaps, at some future time, venture to write, shewing the few cases in which it may be turned to profitable account, and the numberless ones in which it must lead to certain loss.

I quite concur in the opinion of Rousseau, that education has really been going on often before we could conceive it had commenced, and cannot be



begun too early. I hold the same opinion as regards horses, and, indeed, all dumb animals intended for domestic purposes. I hold it equally certain, that proper breeding is quite necessary to produce, or rather to enable us to produce, proper condition in the horse, for the particular purpose for which he is intended. It is quite true, a horse may be improperly bred for a particular purpose in two ways: he may be too highly or too coarsely bred for such purposes. It would perhaps be more to the point, if, instead of saying a horse is improperly bred for a given purpose, I say he is applied to one for which his breeding does not qualify him. Where this is the case, the error most frequently arises from the animal being put to a description of work for which he is not sufficiently *well* bred. Where this is the case, the pace will distress him; and although fast work not only promotes, but is absolutely necessary, to fine condition, such condition can never be arrived at by making the exercise or work of the animal amount to distress. Occasional distress every horse may undergo; but the recurrence of such prostration



of animal vigour must not be frequent, otherwise condition would retrograde just as much, and much more seriously, than it would by the want of sufficient exercise and exertion to keep it up. We will now attend to

### THE RACE-HORSE.

I have been many times asked, "How long it generally takes to train a Race-horse?" This, to the uninitiated, may appear a very simple question, and to be easily answered. That the query is a plain and simple one, is quite certain; yet it is one that it is absolutely impossible to answer in a satisfactory way. Before even a qualified reply could be made, we will just see how many questions we must put to the querist. He asks the question of the time it requires to train *a* Race-horse? I could, or perhaps should, say, *What* Race-horse? My life on it, the person who would ask such a question would at once say, "Oh, any Race-horse." Neither I nor any man could more answer such a question than could a drawing-master answer how long it would take him to teach a pupil he knew nothing of, to draw in a masterly



manner. I did once hear a Frenchman make the only reply that could be made to such a question, in reference to a great stupid-looking lump of humanity “ *C’est selon le talent de monsieur.*” Now, the training of a Race-horse, as respects time, does not rest on any circumstance so easily defined, but on a combination of circumstances; and before any reply to such a question as I have mentioned could be made, it would be quite necessary to ask the following leading ones:—What is his age? Has he been running? What is his present condition? Is he a strong or delicate constitutioned horse? Are his legs and feet sound? What sort of temper is he? If he has run, what is his best distance? Having got these questions answered, we have now to, as it were, handicap his pretensions, qualifications, and peculiarities, and consider how far each may promote or retard his training on, and how far each may counteract the effects of the other in our attempts to bring him out in his best form, or the best that he can be brought up to; for there are certain circumstances and peculiarities in some Race-horses that prevent that parti-



cular horse ever being brought into the best state of condition a Race-horse can be at. And this holds good more with horses that have been running, than with such as have not; for the latter usually come into the trainer's hands comparatively in their natural state; so it is only (in ordinary cases) some little natural imperfections of temper and temperament he has to contend with, and these judicious and proper treatment will eradicate, or, at the least, palliate; for we will not suppose any man insane enough to put a colt in training, who evidently shows natural imperfections of such character as render it impossible, or, indeed, improbable, that he will make a Race-horse.

I certainly have seen colts sent to a trainer, that I fearlessly pronounced never would or could stand the ordeal of training, and others that really shewed physical reasons or symptoms that would prevent their being worth the trouble if they did. Of course the owners did not think so, and I need scarcely say such owners knew little or nothing of Race-horses.

As I am only writing on *condition*, and not on *training*, I shall only mention some of the circum-



stances about a Race-horse, that may render it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to bring him into proper condition to come to the post. How he may run afterwards, is quite another affair. One thing is quite certain—he cannot run with hope of success, unless he is in condition. Of course hundreds have little chance of doing so, though in point of condition they may be perfection itself.

If we could collect half-a-dozen two years' old colts, each possessing the same temper, constitution, and soundness, and each in precisely the same condition, it is more than probable (barring unlooked-for contingencies) they could all be brought out the same week, each fit to run; but it is rare to find half-a-dozen colts, fillies, horses, or mares, in the same stable, each possessing the same attributes as regards the facility, or difficulty, of bringing them out fit to run. So if the whole six were put into a trainer's hands at a given time, and were each required to be brought out to run in the same meeting, do what he might, no doubt some would be in far better form than others; give him (that is the trainer) from a week to



a month's latitude, as to the time his colts would be wanted ; probably, he would bring them all out as fit to run as each could be made ; but confine him to a given period, no human ingenuity could bring out half-a-dozen colts, varying in their attributes, in equally good form and condition at one and the same period, if put into his hands at the same time.

I must, I find, here, not to be misunderstood, make another observation, which is this: Though I am quite clear, that if half-a-dozen colts were put into a trainer's hands, in, we will say, the first week in February, he could not bring them all out in the middle of April, equally fit to run ; let him have these colts six months in his hands, he would probably, under such circumstances, bring them all out in as good condition as they could each be brought to ; but if we confine his exercising and working half-a-dozen colts, to as short a period as we can expect him to bring out those causing little trouble, or difficulty, such as are both troublesome and difficult to train, must in some way suffer in condition, if wanted to run at the same time as the others.



Not to be thought to shrink from answering the question, of the length of time it takes to train a horse to run, I will take a two years' old; for old horses, that is, horses that have been running, vary so much in many particulars, that we might ring the changes on the difficulty, or its reverse of bringing them into condition "*ad infinitum*."

Supposing then a two years' old to have been always well and judiciously fed, to have been broke, taught as far as a Racing-colt wants teaching, namely, to go well, quietly, and collectedly, to lead and follow others in exercise, to go by the side of another colt without shewing vice, been walked on a public road, and through a town, has gone on a race-course, and in a crowd, will do all this quietly, and has had such physic as his constitution may require, and circumstances, such as a frost impeding his exercise, might render necessary:—I should say a trainer could bring out a two years' old, so circumstanced, in perfect condition to run such lengths as two years' old go, in two months from the time he was put into his hands.

I will now suppose a two years' old to be fresh from



his paddock, and to have learned nothing further than to suffer himself to be handled, and to lead with some difficulty from his awkwardness in a cavesson. I have said the other colt would require two months to be got fit to run. I will now give my ideas as to the time the last-mentioned will require to be brought to the same state; I should say five or six times as long; namely, quite or nearly twelve months; but the time can in no way be as definitely given as with the last; and for this reason, we know what the first is when put into the trainer's hands; we can only conjecture from what we have seen of the latter, what he may become when put in situations, and under restraint to which he has been totally unaccustomed. They say that a certain black gentleman, though never represented as amiable, "is good-tempered when he is pleased;" it may turn out so with a colt, but he may become a great reprobate, and indeed savage, when he finds he has other wills to obey than his own. I have seen, or fancied to have seen, something bordering on a little restlessness, (we will call it,) evinced by very fair creatures when bending to the wishes of others;



though, while obeying their own, their smiles were "mild as moonbeams," soft and radiant as those of the sun, and more beautiful than either; we may well therefore take into the category of contingencies waywardness, nay, absolute obstinacy, in a colt, while learning that most irksome of all lessons, obedience to others.

If the reader has been in as many paddocks as I have, and seen as various (and many of them extraordinary) modes of treating racing stock as I have seen exhibited, he will not be surprised, if I say the mode of commencing the bringing the colt into condition, must be influenced by the way in which he has been previously treated. I have seen mares and foals, colts and fillies, mere walking skeletons from starvation. I have seen others nearly so from want of shelter, and running about the whole day to avoid the flies; their feet at the same time battered to pieces by stamping on the hard ground, driven half mad by such pests to animals; and I have seen this in places belonging to persons from whom we might expect better things. I have seen others fat enough and to



spare, but rendered so by nearly the same means we should take to bring a bullock to the same state of obesity ; but oats, the true foundation for a stamina, likely to stand training and racing, were held as useless ; while others, of course, are put into the trainers' hands, high in flesh, but that firm and good—in short, something to work upon.

It will be easily conceived, even by those the least conversant with such matters, that the proceedings with these colts in such different states, must differ as widely as did their former treatment. It is quite probable that among the starved, and particularly the tormented lot, some of them will be found with their feet in so broken and worn a state, that a shoe cannot, or scarcely can, be nailed on them ; this we will say may not matter much, for the first step with them, towards getting them into condition, must be giving them something to get into condition upon ; namely, proper feeding, quiet, and the absence of annoyance ; and with the regularly starved ones, they must be brought up to proper feeding by degrees, or we shall get knots and eruption on the skin, inflamed eyes,



cracked heels, and all those inflammatory ills that horse "is heir to." It will take months to bring round a colt, so impoverished from want of proper nutriment to a state in which we can begin to do anything with him tending to condition, further than getting muscle on his bones. A habit become spare from strong exercise or work, if not overworked, will soon fill up ; for the stamina is still good ; but an impoverished constitution must be nursed ere we can venture to make any call on it for exertion.

The colt loaded with flesh, produced by good food, in improper quantity, will take a considerable time before any steps can be taken with him, in the way of training from another cause ; he must of course be broke before he can be trained, and in his fattened state ; even this must be set about with great caution, for any thing like exertion would probably produce on him the same effects as liberal feeding would on the starved one ; namely, inflammatory symptoms (or realities) somewhere. To bring this gentleman to anything like gentlemanly form, only walking exercise can at first be had recourse to ; his flesh is, in



short, little better than blubber; if that should be got off too suddenly, he would become weak, and, in fact, the means used to get it off quickly would be dangerous in the extreme; for while we are gradually getting off the load of flesh, under which the colt laboured, it is necessary, by proper feeding, to so harden what remains on him as to bring it to wholesome and firm muscle, instead of useless incumbrance; this done, we may venture to lunge the colt, accustom him to a saddle and girths, and when reconciled to this, he has to be backed, a ceremony to be most carefully put in practice,—for there are two things to be guarded against with most scrupulous care, first, not to provoke him to resist, and secondly, not to let him get the mastery, if he does; for should the latter occur, it is ten to one he will always try the same manœuvre in future.

We will suppose him to carry quietly: he must now learn to go; that is, he must learn to go with that uniform, cool and collected stride that is to carry him through his future exercise and work. He has now begun that sort of exercise, tending towards condi-



tion ; in the doing this he will, more or less, in accordance with his temper and docility, shew the effect it has on him ; for, though his task and exertions must be comparatively very slight, still, should his temper be irritable, the restraint he is now under will take greater effect on his habit than such trifling exertion might lead us to expect ; and here a judicious eye, calculating head, and much experience, is wanting so to lessen, or go on, with the present treatment, as shall produce the desired end, without causing the colt to lose condition. We will conclude we have such attributes in him who has the charge of the colt's breaking and tuition, and that he has brought him to go up his gallop kindly, without becoming sluggish, or tricky, or, what is even worse, alarmed at what he is called on to perform.

At so tender an age, continued exertion, light though it might be, would very probably weary a colt—he would in fact, if it was continued, become jaded and dispirited ; nay, possibly might get sore on his shins. It would therefore be judicious to give a few weeks' respite from such daily task ; and as such usually takes



place at, or towards the end of the year, the state of the weather might also render such indulgence convenient as well as judicious, and now a gentle dose of physic would counteract the too sudden effects of a change from exercise to rest. Here, in a large loose box, we will for the present leave him, bearing in mind that though we well know idleness will produce the again throwing up flesh, such effect must not be kept down by low feeding; for though we shall be certain to see him come out again somewhat high, he will be in a far different state from that in which he first came into our hands—his flesh will be good, and on going to work again we may take more liberty with him by far than could have been ventured on in his original state; but, though the colt may be, as it were, laid by for a time, it is only exertion ceases, for a certain degree of condition must be kept up during the whole time of his comparative idleness; and this it will be by the exercise given him in order to keep him within the bounds of some restraint, and that he may not become again wild and forget the lessons he has learnt.



I stated it would take ten or twelve months in a usual way, to bring a colt fresh from his paddock in condition to run, and I think it will not be found I have far over-rated the time required; for if he is fat, as I have supposed one to be, it is some time before we can venture to even begin his lessons, from the danger exertion would produce; and if he be impoverished and low in flesh, it will require quite as long a time to bring him up to a state that will enable him to bear it. If a colt is just in the state he ought to be when put into a trainer's hands, the weeks (for weeks it will take) that are required to bring others into such state will, of course, be saved; that is, where he is in that kind of colt's condition that admits of his immediately commencing his exercise.

Let us suppose the colt to come to the training stables in the month of April, or any month it may suit the convenience or pleasure of his owner to send him there, for it will make little difference as to the time he will require to be broke, taught, and trained, but as a given date we will say April. If in an unfit state to commence exercise, that is, exertion, we give



him from three to six weeks to get into such state of flesh and stamina as we want for present purposes ; say he commences being lunged early in May, by the end of the month he has improved in form, strength, and wind, from his exercise in the lunge has learned to carry a saddle, bear moderate tight girding, knows the feel of a bit in his mouth, and has learned that he must yield his head to the tension (slight as it should be) of the reins, has felt the pressure of the dumb-jockey or German rider (whichever persons may please to call it) on the flaps of the saddle, which prepares him for the somewhat similar pressure of a living rider's knees and thighs ; we suppose him backed, and after being for some days carefully led, is then ridden under the control of the rider only. He follows at a distance the other more advanced colts and horses in training, till he is docile, and follows, stays behind, or leaves them, as the rider desires. During this time he has been ridden by the breaker, or head lad, if he is used to such tuition ; he has now to be mounted by a steady riding boy, and having had a few gentle canters, both by himself and



led by a steady hack, he joins the string, and his training may be said to have commenced, but not his actual training to run, but his training to bring him into sufficient condition to try ; for unless he is to a certain extent really in condition, trying him would be useless, for we cannot tell what may be the powers or speed of a colt or horse, unless he is in sufficient condition to be able to bring both of these attributes out. All this brings us to (say) August ; so soon as the colt's condition is suited for it, he is tried with other two years' old, all, of course, more or less in equally proper condition for the spin they are to get, and pretty good that condition should be, for till such trial of colts of the same age together, which may prove superior is but speculative, and the best judge may be deceived by the style of a colt's going at exercise, and even work ; for when really extended and put to the real test, a great pulling off or exhibition of unexpected capability frequently surprises master, trainer and jockey, in the important testing of such.

I have said the condition of such colts must be good, to enable us to truly judge of their pretensions.



Now some persons might say, (in fact I have had such said to me), "Why take so much time and trouble to bring colts to almost racing condition, merely for a trial of speed? for be the condition ever so moderate, if the condition of *all* was alike, they would *each* be on a par, and be tried under equal advantage and disadvantage." Such idea may at first seem plausible enough, and the suggested plan of saving time feasible enough, but both would quite deceive us if put into practice.

Even the individual who made such suggestion to me could but know, that when a Race-horse starts, he usually is, or is supposed to be, in as good form, that is, is in as good condition to run as he can be brought up to; and any man who has trained Race-horses, knows in what an extraordinary way some horses improve in training when compared with others. If, therefore, colts were tried each in (we will say) half condition, the one that would improve but little by better training, would be tried under such great advantage over the one that would much improve by proper training, that we should probably be led into



estimation of the relative pretensions of the two that would be the very reverse of a correct one ; we should probably form favourable opinions of one that would never be fit to run for a man's hat, and throw aside the other that would train into a Race-horse. If it were possible to ascertain that in a short time we had brought two colts each to exactly half his powers, and each by further training would precisely improve the other half, my friend's suggestion might be taken, and we might save ourselves the trouble of training our colts to their greatest perfection, for in such case, when perfect, the result would be the same as when half so ; but as this cannot be done, nothing but proper condition can enable us to judge of colts in their trial.

It is quite certain that one colt can be made fit in less time than another, perhaps in half the time ; frequently the difference required is still greater. A light delicate colt is usually naturally particularly clear in his wind, and has generally no more, often less, flesh on him than we wish him to have. Now, for short distances, supposing a colt to be a good goer



by nature, if he is clear in his wind, and has no superfluous flesh or fat in him, or on him, he is pretty near, or perhaps quite, as fit to run as all the training in the world could make him; in fact, if in such state, no matter how little might have been done with him, with more work he would very probably train off, that is, go back in condition; thus in trying colts, one, after his ordinary exercise, may only require a very few brushing gallops, and one sweat, whereas another will require frequent, and strong work, and sundry sweats to even bring him fit to try. This matters not as regards two colts, though, by the bye, it often matters a good deal, as to the legs of the strong one; but a horse or colt can be no better than quite fit for what he has to perform, be that brought about by what means or time it may; and of this there can be no doubt, that in point of condition, whether to try, or race, or, indeed, any thing else, fit he must be; if we wish him to do it to advantage.

There is, however, a further necessity for a colt, being in something like racing condition, when brought out to trial. We try three, four, or six two



years' old together, by this we of course find out their different merits, as two years' old ; and I make this reservation, because one colt may possibly shew superior at the time, yet another may, when grown a year older, prove a better Race-horse than the one that beat him in a year old trial, particularly if the former be an overgrown one ; but to return to the trial on their merits at the age they are. One is most probably very superior to the rest, this in no way proves him any thing superior, except it be with those he was tried with, for they might be a very bad lot ; so beating them proves nothing but that he was better than worse ; in fact, as I have sometimes said of some I have had the pleasure of owning, "He is a pretty good one among bad ones." It will be necessary therefore to form some sure estimate of the quality of the lot, and this is done by trying the best of that lot with something whose pretensions we can correctly measure ; therefore, either at the first trial with the lot, or in a separate one afterwards, we try the winning colt with some one we know can go. This must necessarily be a horse or colt, that has been running ; he will of



course be in training, in fact in work, and pretty nearly fit to race; so unless the condition of the colt to be tried is very close on that of the trial-horse, we should be doing him injustice, in condemning him if beaten off in his second trial, and should not give him sufficient credit, if he made a good fight of it, though beaten. Thus, condition is, in figurative language, the key stone to the superstructure in which dwell all our hopes of pleasure, credit, and merit in our stable.

All this qualifying for breaking, teaching, training, and trying a colt, has brought us to near the close of the year; and to recover the colt from the excitement and exertion he has undergone, he has, as I before said, been put by for six weeks, this brings us to the middle of January. We have now to get him through his physic, which may be one, two, or three doses if required; we have to reduce the useless flesh he has thrown up. This will require stronger exercise than was wanted, or even safe to give him, to get off the soft fat he formerly owned, still it must not be hurried, and long walking must be resorted to for a short time,



and then slow gallops for short distances, either alone, or with others, beginning the novitiate he has gone through. This bring us to the beginning or middle of February; our colt is wanted to run rather early in April, and with the treatment and preparation he has had, supposing his constitution to be of an ordinary kind, there is quite time enough for as much strong exercise, and as many sweats, as any two years' old should go through. By the last week in March, our colt is fit to take, at any time, the last three or four brushing gallops, and the last sweat, to prepare him for any day that he may be called on to start.

It will be seen that we have wasted no time, for that judiciously given to ease the colt at the end of the year was not waste, it was eventually forwarding him, by putting him in spirits, and vigour, to resume his labours; whereas, had we kept unremittingly at him, his legs would probably have suffered, his temper would have possibly suffered, he would have become bored with his work, and probably more or less cunning, and lurching, when at it; a jade when called on, and fractious or savage when not; all



very much increasing the difficulty of bringing a horse out in temper, inclination, and condition to win, for the benefit of his owner, and to the credit of his trainer.

Persons not acquainted with the great difficulty there is in bringing a Race-horse into the highest possible state of condition, might not think it a matter of much consequence what might be the temper of a Race-horse. If he was a good one, I grant that if he does run, and wins, his temper may not be of much importance to his master, be it good or bad. But there are some tempers that make it almost a misfortune for a trainer to have the horse possessing it in his stable; the inference would probably be, that I allude to the savage, that it is dangerous to approach. But I do not mean him, bad as he is, there is one a still greater annoyance; the savage will rarely attempt to hurt the boy who looks after him, and the trainer knows well how or when to approach him, so as not to be injured by such a reprobate. Such a horse may do his work kindly enough while at it, and may give his race kindly; if so, as he is kept (where all ill-



tempered persons should be kept) by himself, he may bite the walls or himself (and some will do the latter, if not prevented) at his own pleasure. But the pest is an irritable unhappy wretch, a frightened devil, that is alarmed at every thing; he always *appears* alarmed, in his stable, or box, and is *really* alarmed at his work unless great caution is used with him; all sorts of devices and manœuvres are necessary to get a little work into such a horse, without rousing his apprehension, which, if roused, it will take perhaps a week to pacify; probably, for that time, it may become necessary to stop his work altogether, and to send him, as if he was a leper, to walk alone; he is also off his feed for the veriest trifle that may occur.

I had one of this sort, of course a delicate feeder at all times. One day, after seeing her corn given her, I saw she took no notice of it, but stared about her, looking in all directions. I looked, but saw nothing. I listened, and then heard a humblebee buzzing about. I caught it, the mare snorting all the time; and I left her looking as alarmed as if a Bengal tiger had paid her a visit. I went to her again in an hour; not an



oat had she touched ; and it was only by sending her out a two hours' walk, I brought her to her senses and appetite. A pleasant animal to train ; if my reader really thinks so, in all sincerity and good-nature, I wish him her fellow.

The only redeeming circumstance in the trainer's favour, when having such horses to deal with, is that they usually require but little work, for their fidgety tempers keep them ever on the watch, and on being dressed, or even being saddled, their antics is exercise to them without even leaving their stable.

I will here mention a short anecdote, which shows how differently men estimate different things, and particularly such as are likely to promote their pleasure or interest.

A friend of mine, who had no money to spare, thought he should like a little taste of racing. God help his innocence, if he hoped by that to "put money in his purse ;" so knowing I estimated the irritable mare at a very low price, wished to purchase her. "If," said I, "you have very little money, I will tell you how to a certainty to make it



less; if you have a great deal, how to make it a very little. Run an opposition coach, or buy a bad Race-horse; the dice-box won't do, for it is possible you may win by that, but you certainly will not by the others; but," said I, "as to the mare, she has three great draw-backs,—she is very troublesome to dress." "I have a boy that won't mind that." "Good. She is uncommonly difficult to train." "I have plenty of time, so that will be an amusement to me." "Good again; but she is good for nothing when she is trained." "If that was the case, you would not have told me of it." "I have a great mind to sell her to you for your ingratitude," said I; but I did not, I sold her to one I cared less about.

Now flighty Race-horses, and flighty ladies, are very well in the hands of other people; when so appropriated, I hold the latter as neither more or less, than divinities, but they are both somewhat ticklish addenda to our own establishments. I have had some practical experience of the vagaries of the former, I have heard something of those of the latter. Call them vagaries if you will, call the latter authors



of them by any term that still indicates fascination and beauty, unless you are more or less than man, you must still allow that—

“ Dear, sweet little creatures, we can’t do without them—  
They’re all that is dear and seducing to man.”

“ *Mais revenons à nos moutons,*” that is, *revenons* to the very common place subject I have in hand, namely, “ the Proper Condition for all Horses.”

I have omitted the condition necessary for, and the means by which it is to be produced in the yearling as a Racer ; I have done so for two reasons. I am not writing on training, and even if I were, the preparation of the yearling, and the two years’ old, to bring each in proper condition for what will be required of him is so similar, that here to mention the slight difference of treatment would be useless ; for the same reason, I shall omit the mode by which a three years’ old is brought into condition to run : for in this particular, physic, exercise, and work, each adapted to the colt’s age, is the whole secret of what was once held as the craft, in fact, mystery of train-



ing, a process in which there is really no more absolute mystery than there need be pretended in bringing a half-starved pauper, debilitated town rake, or over-fed gourmand, into a healthy state, by country air, proper alteratives, proper exercise, and an abstinence from what is improper for him to take and do.

It will be seen, from what I have stated as the necessary time that is occupied in breaking, teaching, and training a two years' old colt, that such as come out fine ones, though only of perhaps thirty months' age, have really two years' hard feeding in them, that is the best of oats. This circumstance as much as any thing, and perhaps more, brings out the racing colt at an early age, so much more in the form and with the powers of the adult horse, than is manifested in colts of a similar age differently bred, and consequently differently fed.

I in no way, however, mean to say, I consider this early forcing a colt into a horse (if I may be allowed such expression) is eventually advantageous to him. I am quite satisfied it has a direct opposite tendency in more ways than one. I believe it brings



on not only liability but predisposition to many ailments; but, worse than all, as relates to the lasting properties of the horse, it enables us to take those liberties with him we could not with a colt fed more in accordance with what would be necessary for his mere health, and his eventually growing into a fine animal. But his doing this would not answer the purpose of the racing man; he does not fix his mind on, at a future day, possessing a fine energetic, sound horse; his object is to get a premature colt: the mode of bringing him up, no doubt, promotes, indeed, effects this, when the necessary means are used, and the same thing that renders him premature, is the foundation of condition. I may be asked whether such condition is *proper* condition, as stated in the title of the book? In reply, I beg to say, "Yes! quite proper for the racing colt, though not, perhaps, quite proper for the animal, looking at him as a horse only."

Let it not, however, be supposed that the colt would be better if left in a state of nature, till he verged on the horse. On the contrary, I am quite



clear that such mode of rearing him would be highly prejudicial to him, looking at him as an animal destined (by the will and habits of man) to undergo exertion, that he rarely or ever would undergo in a state of nature. But further : in such state no horse is, or can be in this country, for it would be absurd to call a colt, confined in the rich pastures of our country, in a state of nature ; he is virtually in an artificial state, the only difference between him and the paddock reared colt would be—the one would be brought up in an artificial state on rich grass in a pasture, the other on good oats in a paddock. The wild horse of the desert, the pampa, or the prairie, is scarcely more in the same state as the one brought up confined in a rich pasture, than is the one brought up in the paddock ; a fact of which the wild horse most perfectly convinces those who attempt his capture ; while the York, Lincoln, Leicester, or Suffolk colt, would be as soon exhausted in his exertions to avoid being caught, as would a sheep ; in fact, I would back a good wild-bred Devon, or South-down, against him. The short herbage the wild horse gets, the exercise



attendant on getting enough of it, and his natural roving disposition, keep him to a certain degree in condition. The home bred and grass fed one is no more in such state than is the ox feeding in the same or the adjacent pasture. If the wild horse was as well bred, and judiciously bred, as is the racing colt, and if with his wild feeding and wild habits, we would give him his five or six feeds of oats per day, I am not clear but he would give some of our stabled ones a good deal of trouble to catch him over the Beacon course, nor am I sure we should see him more beaten at "the Bushes," than I have seen many more civilized flyers.

I have stated that I consider the means by which we, as it were, force the colt into the horse to be prejudicial to him, as a mere animal, in more ways than one; I have admitted it is more than probable it lays the foundation for diseases of an inflammatory character; we will now look at its effects in another way. By such precocity we are enabled to get a *colt* through more work than falls to the lot of most *horses* not used for racing purposes; condition, and condition



only, enables his internal stamina to undergo this, but unfortunately we cannot, figuratively speaking, give corn to his joints; high feeding, no doubt, causes even these to grow into something like the dimensions of those of the horse, but the common-place saying, that "Nature will be served," is a very true one, and though we may give an artificial constitution and stamina, we cannot to the same degree, or in any degree approximating to it, give artificial joints, or articulations of joints; these often, nay, mostly, shew that though a colt may look well, and in short be, in the highest state of health and condition, nature will not permit us to effectually force her works in all ways.

Race-horses are, unfortunately for them, bred solely with an eye to the pounds, shillings, and pence to be made by them—so, perhaps, are the generality of other animals; but the Race-horse is now-a-days trained and run, solely for these pounds, shillings, and pence. Now many other horses are used for mere show, or pleasurable purposes; if favourites, are treated in a manner most likely to contribute to their continued



well doing ; not so the Race-horse, the effect (for or against his owner's interest) of our treatment of him is a matter of mere avaricious calculation, and we cannot disguise this not very flattering truth, the better animal he is, the more he is imposed upon. "Making hay while the sun shines," is to the utmost meaning of the adage, put in force with the Race-horse ; and without attempting to absolutely justify, I must in candour admit, that such proceeding is necessary, unless a man subjects himself to be ruined by racing ; the running a really good horse, when we see a probability of his breaking down, seems certainly impolitic, and certainly unjustifiable. The running him when we feel satisfied that the winning a race will incapacitate him from ever running for another, to a feeling mind, borders on absolute atrocity. But to first speak of the policy : That may probably be good in many cases ; for if the stake be a large one, and the bets heavy, the winning it may be of far more consequence than patching up doubtful legs with the uncertainty of their standing in future ; nor is the bringing on infirmity, or rather bringing existing in-



firmity to its climax, such unmitigated cruelty as it may at first appear ; for if the goodness and character of the horse or mare be such as to produce compunction and regret on seeing either a cripple for life—as probably, after a very short time, no pain is felt, and as either animal under such circumstances would be kept for breeding purposes—could either speak, they would probably bless the day that finished their racing career, as one that brought on a life of such ease, and cessation of exertion, as they never before knew.

Such a case as I have last mentioned, will shew the absolute necessity of condition. In such case it would be held of importance enough to induce the trainer to continue his horse at work at the risk of his breaking down in training ; he well knows that unless in proper condition, his horse would have no more chance of winning, though sound, than he would if broken down, and certainly not a tithe part as much as if lame ; he risks it, and then game, and the finest condition, enables his horse to win, in stable phrase, “on three legs.”



An acquaintance of mine has so much gratification in training Race-horses, that without, from circumstances, being at all called on to do so, he will train for any friend or acquaintance who may please to send him his horses. Of all men living, I do believe he takes the most pains with horses under his care; I am quite certain he thinks all day of what will be most advantageous for them, and I have no doubt his dreams at night have a similar tendency. He mentioned to me that a friend had sent him two or three second-rate horses to train; that he was doing his best for them; but they were such cripples that though he had been told, and indeed knew he was not giving them proper work, he was afraid to do more, lest he should break them down at once. "Pray," said I, "has their owner ever injured you?" "Certainly not," said he. "Then," replied I, "as you can have no wish to punish him, put his horses to proper work; the worse they are, the better condition they want, to give them a shadow of a chance of winning, if they can't stand getting into such condition, the sooner you break them down, or



break their necks, the better for their owner." He laughed, but admitted I was quite right.

As neither all the world, nor all the racing men, can be wrong, and as all the latter, if they are owners of horses, have agreed, that whatever may become of the legs, condition must be had in the Race-horse, I believe the advice I gave as above, was really to the interest of the owner of the cripples; it is a common expression, particularly of persons who stickle very much for that very scarce animal an absolutely sound horse, that "a horse can't go without legs." I think I may fairly admit this to be fact, but he may go with very queer ones, and will again. I have often seen them win on three legs, sometimes on only two worthy the name of legs, and once saw one win on four such legs as hardly admitted apology for calling them such; but one thing I never did see, namely, a horse out of condition winning against another fit to go, unless, indeed, their comparative merits were New-market to a nine-pin.

We will now look a little at condition in Race-horses of a different class or standing, namely, the



“old uns.” Now, *old*, used in the conventual term of the racing stable, implies quite a different meaning to the one in use in other places, and in reference to other horses. Old, in other places, and used as description by other men, really means a horse old in years; but in racing stables it is only used in a comparative sense, in reference to absolute colts; and the term “colt” is differently estimated in racing establishments to what it is in hunting ones, or other stables. Thus we see, on a race being described—“In this order they ran to (say) the Duke’s stand; here Nat (or some other jockey) set the old horse going.” Now this “old horse” is probably what, in a hunting stable, would be called the colt, namely, four years old, and in the latter situation would only be shown the hounds, prior to his being the next season carefully ridden with them for a short time, or short burst, and then sent home: at five his real work has not began; at four the Race-horse’s is usually nearly concluded. Nor is this to be wondered at; for artificial precocity, though it may answer a particular purpose, for the time being, is a very different state



to work upon, to one where the full development of power is the natural production of adult age.

These old horses, as we will term them, cannot confidently rely on their year's work being finished before some time in October (of course, with exceptions); they will then have to be indulged for some weeks in a box, as I described the young ones being after breaking and trying, and before again going into training. The condition of the colt, after having been in exercise and training, more or less, from April to November, we may suppose to be pretty good; but the older horses, in that month are, in slang term, "hard as nails;" the young ones still want screwing up to a state of high and firm condition, the old horses want to be let down a few pegs from the tension their stamina has been kept up to; they have, at least, three years and a half hard feeding in them, yet no fear of their being fat inside, and they give ocular demonstration of having none out; they do not want nutriment or stimulus, but repose; "they ask not Paradise, but rest;" a loose box, and freedom from the daily routine of gallops, the weekly,



or, at least, frequent recurrence of sweats, and the often-repeated excitement, and (with some) dread of the race. Absence of these is paradise to them ; and the beneficial results of constant hard feeding in such horses is shown by the change a short respite from work makes in them. The animal who, on being thrown out of work, was seen so bored and jaded by it a boy could scarcely kick him along in his walking exercise, will, in a less time than could be supposed, be seen playing in his box, and require some caution in the boy that he does not get hurt by the gambols of the animal that, a month before, was merely a machine that had the power when roused to it, but wanted inclination to show the amount of speed and endurance constant training had wrought him up to.

I stated, at the commencement of these sheets, that I considered the proper definition of the term "condition," as applied to horses, to be a proper, indeed the most proper, state they can be brought to, to undergo what we may require of them, the state of condition of course varying in accordance with what is or may be required. Condition certainly implies a



state fit to go ; but with horses that have been going, we must now pay attention to quite another sort of condition — namely, condition to rest. Therefore horses with their bodies, that is, constitutions, heated by high feeding and frequent excitement, require care lest the sudden transition from strong work to rest may produce detrimental instead of beneficial effects ; there is no more mystery in the mode to be adopted in letting down our living machine than there is in the winding up. The chief thing required to effect either is good judgment in adapting our measures to the state, constitution, and disposition of the different animals under observation. Physic, change of food, diminishing, more or less, the exercise of each animal, and leaving others in a state of absolute and total rest, are the only measures necessary to be adopted with horses out of training, if they are in good health. If they are not, and I could not decidedly fix on the cause of it, I should lose no time in sending for such professional skill as probably would ; for I ever held it a maxim, that no horse should be permitted to remain a day after illness of some sort was



detected, without means being taken to prevent its going on: a certain degree of heat of blood, filling, more or less, of the legs, sore backs, cracked heels, or perhaps sore shins, and battered feet, are the leading ailments found in Race-horses after a season's racing career. These predominated much more formerly than now; for before Race-horse vans, and subsequently rail-roads, were in general use, a four year old country plater often did not see his home for months together. Then change of stables, water, provender, and exercise ground, sometimes hot and dusty, then again wet roads to travel on, sometimes unavoidable chills from weather, and sometimes unskilful blacksmiths, laid a horse far more open to such casualties as I have mentioned than he is now, when he may be said to be constantly under the trainer's eye. Formerly, a Race-horse of a certain age was started off on what might be called a regular spring, summer, and autumn's circuit or campaign—either term will do; for Judge, General, or Race-horse seldom go on such expeditions without something bordering on plunder being contemplated in some way.



Having shown that proper condition is required for each of the situations in which I have as yet shown the Race-horse, young or old, I will suppose him to have had his six weeks or two months' indulgence; we have to begin to screw him up again, not to concert, but to running pitch. I do not mean here to go through the description of the mode or treatment; for as probably the reader never contemplates the training his own horse, a description of such would only weary, without being useful to him; but as allusive to proper condition, I trust it may be acceptable if I say something on a point that I know has somewhat puzzled some who, though conversant with the general or even proper treatment of ordinary horses, know little of the routine of racing stables.

I have frequently heard persons express surprise at the idea of a Race-horse being made fit to run on a certain day, and have expressed an idea, that if a horse is quite up to the mark in point of racing condition, that he must be ready, or fit to go on *any* day, while in such condition; and such conclusion I admit to be a natural one enough. No doubt, *if* a horse is fit



to run, it matters not when he runs ; but “ there’s the rub,” he cannot be kept quite fit to run on *any* day that he may be unexpectedly called upon, and it is that which appears mysterious to so many, and which I shall endeavour to explain ; and I am the more tempted to do so, from a late occurrence shewing me such explanation is wanting to many.

The reader, and indeed the public, know a good many stringent remarks were made not long since on the steward of certain races putting off such meeting for a week. Owners, trainers, jockies, and betters, were all loud in their deprecations of such proceeding ; so I need say nothing to add to such censure. More than one of my acquaintances, (and one or two of those were hunting men,) considered the censure far exceeded the offence ; I have no doubt either of these would have held the change of a meet of the fox-hounds, without due notice being given, a far greater cause for such censure. The merits of such opinion it is not my business to discuss, but the remarks made are more germane to the affair in hand. They quite agreed that those who might come to see the races



might have cause to complain of their disappointment, and the probable inconvenience, or expense, it might produce ; but they did not see, if a horse was ready to run on the Monday or Tuesday, why he should not be just as fit to run on the next ; they were probably thinking of their Hunters, who, when once in condition, may be held, if well, fit to go on any day ; it is far different with the Race-horse, and no mystery in the case either.

It is by progressive means, the Race-horse is brought from any state to that condition that makes him fit to race ; but he is not in a state to be *quite* fit to run on *any* day. From first-rate general racing condition, he is by further progressive work brought up to the necessary, or desirable point, at which he can run in his best form ; this is done by increasing the pace, length, or both (as the case may be) of his gallops, and sweat some days previous to his going for the race he is engaged in. The trainer makes him commence this increased work, earlier or later, previous to the day of running, as he knows will best suit the condition and constitution of his horse ; in which,



temper has also sometimes to be taken into consideration; for unless it is, one might become alarmed, another might more or less sulk. Now, why horses cannot be kept up to the highest possible state of condition to race is this; the kind of work they undergo for some time before the day they expect to run, is such as no horse could stand for any length of time, without his constitution, spirits, and legs, suffering by it; like many other things, a certain quantum gives increased vigour; the dose too strong, or too often repeated, kills; so the very discipline that for, say ten days, brings the horse out with increased powers, would have an opposite effect if carried on ten days longer, so a trainer has no little cause for apprehension, if having his horse just at what he knows is his best form on a particular day, he finds the race put off for seven days to come.

It may be said that other horses engaged in the same race will be placed under the same disadvantage. If they would be so, it would be fair enough, as each would run under similar disadvantage, and they would do this if every horse was exactly alike in usual



constitution, wind, soundness, and temper ; but, of course, so far from so being, they vary in these particulars, and many others, very considerably ; therefore some would be very much affected by the delay, others not near so much, and some perhaps not at all. There are certain horses naturally light in their middles, light in themselves, and always so clear in their wind, that they want little preparation ; and, in fact, figuratively speaking, the less they get the better they are. Such would not suffer by a change of day, or rather a week ; but a strong constitutioned, therefore probably, comparatively speaking, thick-winded horse, requires such slavery to get him right, that nature would cry “enough,” if he had to continue it ; for, though such slavery may be necessary to get off any spare flesh he may have on him, and to get him clear in his wind, it is not beneficial to his spirits, or legs ; so more than is indispensable to give vigour to the constitution, lighten the body, and clear the wind, would render him jaded in his spirits and stale on his legs ; and the legs of such horses usually do suffer much in training ; the apparent mystery, therefore, of preparing



a horse for a particular day is easily solved; it is merely so regulating his work, as to bring him to his best-form at a given time; and unless he is brought to this, if the others are, he must be very superior indeed to have a chance of beating them.

There are three observations I shall make to my reader, and I believe and trust the truth of them will not be denied by any owner of Race-horses, or the trainers of them. Second-rate horses, in second-rate condition, will nine times in ten lose; second-rate horses, in bad condition, will *always* lose, and the best horses in bad condition will very rarely win. Condition will certainly pull an inferior horse through against a better, but then even the better must be bad; for good ones are not allowed to run, unless their condition is what it ought to be.

We often hear that such a horse "was not fit," "was short of work," "was not in his usual form," nay, sometimes it is asserted roundly that he "was dead amiss," when he was beaten for such or such a race. I never attach any credence to such reports; instead of the horse having been *amiss*, the saying so



is generally a *hit* to answer some purpose. Horses, if they are of a class superior to those only fit to run for saddles and bridles, are not permitted to start if "dead amiss." I must, however, contradict myself here, for in truth many do start when in such state, but (*sub voce*) not when they are meant to win; for then, depend on it, the condition of the horse will be good enough, whatever may be the conditions made on starting him, which are sometimes little deviations from what people might expect, that lead to results they anticipate still less. Such conditions sometimes in no trifling degree deceive the public; but it is very rarely the trainer allows the condition of his horse to deceive him. Proper condition is first, last, head, and front, of all attention and intention in a racing stable; next to that, is attention to the state of the legs. These are doubtless objects of the greatest importance to most horses, they are of great importance to the Race-horse, but even these must yield in our consideration to the still greater importance of condition.

Having taken a cursory glance at Race-horses, in their several states and gradations, from the paddock



to the race-course, we will now look at them in a very different situation ; namely, their duties done as Racers, and, supposing them to have been superior, or, if not, their blood to be of a fashionable and running character, we will look at them when “put to the stud,” that is, devoted to breeding purposes ; and as the Race-horse begins life, or at least ought to begin it, under the strictest attention to his proper condition as a foal, so he ought to end it under the same attention as Sire or Dam.

Without attempting to enter on pathological disquisition, I should consider that perfect health and constitution in the parents are matters of the first consequence, when we wish to breed an animal who will require both in the highest perfection to enable him to go through the severe ordeal to which the Race-horse is necessarily subjected. Now there is a proper condition to ensure or promote perfect health in a state of ease, as there is to ensure the same state under constant exertion ; and unless attention is paid to such condition in both situations, disorganization, if not disease of the system, will manifest itself in



one situation as well as in the other, though in a different way. It is very probable that disease may shew itself in a way, and of a character that may not in the same form be perpetuated to the offspring ; but it is more than probable that its effects would in *some* way be inherited, at all events, it would be highly injudicious to risk such consequences to an animal that we at least hope will prove a valuable one.

As I before stated, I do not intend here to enter on the subject of breeding, but shall confine myself to condition ; and the proper condition of Sire and Dam shall be the limits of my observations.

If it is allowed me that health and vigour are great desideratums in producing healthful and vigorous progeny, let us see what is likely to produce such in the parents ; on this I know I am at issue with some to whose opinion in many things I bow in deference, but as they have not in this particular convinced me they are right, so have they failed in bringing me to the conviction I am wrong. I reason on this point from analogy, and analogy not based on theory, but admitted fact. Now I take this as my



data. Exercise, and a proper state between a wasted frame and one loaded to obesity, are both necessary to a state of health, and the full enjoyment of different attributes of body, and in man greatly conduce to those of the mind also; with this conviction full before them, I have always considered the generality of owners of Sires treat them in a way setting such conviction at defiance; for instance, a Race-horse is taken from a state of constant exercise and periodical strong work, accustomed from a colt to the bracing air of the downs, or training ground, (which must be at all events an extensive open space), from this as a Sire, he is put into a box, often without any outlet to it; and here, without any exercise beyond what he may be disposed or enabled to give himself, the first desideratum with many owners seems to be to get the greatest quantum of avoirdupoise, in the shape of fat on him, that his frame can carry. *Quere*, Have we never heard of apoplexy with such horses? if so, doubtless there long existed tendency towards it, and where such tendency exists, I cannot conceive the system to have been in the full enjoyment of perfect



health. It is quite true such horses will come from their box looking vigorous enough, and probably riotous enough; this is no proof of vigorous health, but excitement, from knowing the cause of their being brought out; and well they may, for few are brought out on any other occasion.

I have had three I used for such purpose: one a thorough-bred one, that was so used in the spring, but he got his day a week, or nearly so, with the hounds in the winter, and regular gentle exercise in summer; another was a Yorkshire harness horse, he I kept at regular moderate work, and at exercise in harness, even during the spring; the other was, or had been, a Race-horse, he was one of the best Hacks, notwithstanding this, I ever had; I rode him constantly as such, and short airings all through the spring season; each of these were somewhat high in flesh, but not loaded with flesh to really encumber them.

I am quite certain that the Sire, worth a bare hundred, that is led from fair to fair in the spring, is treated in a way far more conducive to his health and vigour, and that of his progeny, than is the one worth three thousand.



It is a common expression with grooms attending such Sires, that the horses' "work," as it is technically called, is quite sufficient exertion "without any other:" no idea can be more preposterous; if it is work, the more he requires proper exercise to bring him to proper condition to perform it without danger from it. Let a horse in this gross state be taken a canter of a quarter of a mile; if he is not heard to be a roarer, which he very probably has become, it would be found that after this quarter of a mile canter, he would be in a somewhat different state to what he was when after a four mile sweat at a telling pace his boy said, or might have said, "he wouldn't have blown a candle out;" the slightest exertion now would set him blowing like a grampus, and the effect of half a mile gentle canter would probably be finding him on his back in his box. I must maintain, such a horse is not in perfect health; idleness and stimulating food, and being in a state of excitement, keep him in high, but false spirits, but his system is virtually in a state of comparative debility. Port wine, turtle, and an easy chair, would



no doubt produce a person that a Turk would consider handsome; but without meaning indelicacy in the allusion, I am not aware that such Aldermanic Sire would be the best to select, if we wanted a race of Runners, Hunters, or Warriors. Horses for stud purposes are not wanted to be in racing or hunting condition, but the condition of the fat ox is even worse by far than either of the others would be.

It may be very fairly urged, that the state of the legs, and, much oftener than the public suspect, the state of the wind of stud horses, precludes their taking such exercise as I would wish to give them; not a bit. Few are in such state as not to be capable of taking exercise of some sort, and in some way; and if I was offered the use of a paddock of unusual size, that a horse could exercise himself in, I would reject it; I would greatly prefer a horse, infirm or not, taking exercise at my discretion than his own; if he was sound, he would not probably be disposed to give himself exercise enough; if otherwise, the twists, turns, and sudden stops, a loose horse gives himself, would be very likely to make him worse.



On his back, or with him in hand, we can give him as much exercise as he requires, and no more; and such with me he should, to the best of my judgment, daily get; and I should not fear that, in point of proper condition for his destined purpose, he would show badly.

We will now turn to the mares put to the stud. As regards them, I am precisely of the same opinion as I entertain respecting the Sire—they should be well, and look well; their condition should shew they were liberally, but judiciously fed and attended to; they should be fed in such quantity as would make each shew she got enough, that is, she should be a little higher in flesh than a working mare, but I hold absolute fatness to be not only detrimental to her and her offspring, but dangerous to both. Stating the quantum of general food or corn that horses in any state require, can at best be but given as regards several together and taking the average; so it is with the brood mares; but this is quite certain, be it little or much, each should get what will keep her in a healthy, and, if I may use the term, comfortable



state. If I had a favourite horse, and found it was necessary or beneficial to him to get a bushel of corn a day, he should have it, if money was no object; but if I had one in the next stall who would only eat three quarters, if he looked well, and felt well, I should have no fear of his being and going well; such difference would only shew the nutritious quality of corn took more effect on the one than the other, or that the digestive powers of one were stronger and quicker than the other. To shew that such difference in animal powers of stomach is the case, I will give personal illustrations of it, and I assure my reader I shall in no way exaggerate.

A friend of mine has the bump of digestiveness developed in a somewhat extraordinary degree,—at least, I suppose he has, though I have not seen it; but proofs of his digestive powers, or rather of the quantum he gives them to digest, I have.

His pursuit obliges him to breakfast early; this consists of three eggs, a twopenny loaf, two mutton chops, or two equally solid slices of broiled ham; at eleven o'clock he is famishing; not a sandwich, but



sandwiches, and a pint of Bass's ale, to stop this craving. Though with a strong predilection for what is fashionable, his predilection for eating is greater, so beyond four o'clock he cannot get without his dinner; for this he patronizes sundry table d'hotes; but to his credit be it said, that, as a matter of conscience, he rings the changes on them, so only victimises each in its turn. Being a pleasant fellow and single man, he dines out by invitation certainly three times a week; by six, or whatever the dinner hour may be, the table d'hote seems to have been forgotten, or nearly so, for at that hour he really eats no more than the best feeder at table; he never interferes with any edible produced with tea,—not that he could not, but a dozen, more or less, of bank-note bread and butter would not affect him, so he modestly declines eating "slices for six," and to empty a plate of anything else would be ungentlemanly. If it is an old fashioned family, and any supper is produced, he is somehow always particularly partial to whatever appears as least likely to shew diminution by the quantity taken from it; as regards anything else that in his polite attentions to



his neighbours he recommends, he is sure to shew his sincerity by also helping himself. On his return to his lodgings his supper is always laid ready for him ; and he declares he knows not why, but he always relishes that meal more than any other in the day. Now for myself, after my breakfast, I very rarely touch anything in the eating way till dinner ; at that, soup I never refuse, fish I do not often eat, and certainly four ounces of animal food is as much as I can manage ; tea I cannot do without ; two thin slices of bread and butter suffice for me, and supper I do not take. Yet I and my friend are about on a par as to condition as regards the flesh we carry, which is not much on either.

The acquaintance I mentioned as being so partial to training, has usually a brood mare or two of his own, and also of some friends, under his care ; these are fat as prize cattle, yet he is scarcely satisfied ; I really believe his estimation of what this proper condition should be, would be their being unable to walk ; now mine would be their being, in regard of flesh, quite able and willing to trot, and I am quite satis-



fied, that if in the early part of gestation, they were gently ridden, they would be all the better for it, that is. if the state of their legs permitted it. Cart mares not only undergo exercise during this period, but work, having but a very short period of idleness allowed them ; and I think I am right in saying, that fewer casualties occur among them than among the thorough-breds. No animal can be in really good condition, for even the purpose of common health, that is fat inside, and I should say, such state at the time of parturition, is an extremely dangerous one. Vigorous health in the dam, while she carries the embryo horse, no doubt renders it vigorous also, but fat creates no vigour in anything. We will not apply the term "mind," to the dumb animal, but temperament, I think more than probably, in the mother influences it in the progeny, and a dull and all but lethargic temperament brought on by obesity and want of active habit in the dam, is, I should say, very likely to produce sluggish feeling and disposition in the foal.

The racing colt is not allowed to depend longer for



its support on its mother than can be helped, I admit, but even so it must depend on it for a time; therefore, if she is not in the finest possible state of health while suckling her foal, it would certainly be sucking nutriment of a deleterious quality, whereas its quality ought to be of the very best; and perfect health, it seems rational to suppose, is most likely to produce this. Medical practitioners often entertain considerable apprehension of untoward consequences, when engaged to attend a patient of very lusty body and inactive habits, and strongly urge exercise to counteract such state. Our own species are not, in the ordinary proceedings of nature, so diametrically opposite to all others, as to render what is either beneficial or hurtful to the one, its reverse as regards the other.

If I was writing on the subject of breeding, I should venture my ideas as regards the very important part of it, namely, the selection of proper animals to breed from; but this not being the case, I confine my observations to their condition, a point of perhaps equal importance as the breed; for with the best blood the



most judicious care can select, we shall certainly fail in deriving the full benefit of such care, and of course, expense, unless sire, dam, foal, and Race-horse, are each kept in proper condition for the purposes to which they are severally designed.

I have endeavoured, in the foregoing sheets, to show that the hopes of the breeder, owner, and trainer of Racing stock mainly depends on proper condition. Certainly a fortune does not depend on the condition of any other horse; but I can assure my reader his comfort, pleasure, credit, and indeed interest, as mainly do, whether I may convince him that it is so or not. I will therefore now take in hand a very old acquaintance—

### THE HUNTER.

Unless there is hunting, we certainly should not have Hunters; but we may go further, and say that, in a general way, in this country, unless we had Hunters, we should not have hunting. There are certainly countries where the *men* are hunters, but not the *horses*. Defend me from such; for though



with the Hunters I could get on pretty well without the men, yet I could not get on at all with the men without the Hunters;—at least, not at all to my liking. I have tried it lately, and like it about as well as I expected I should; in short, it has thrown me quite out of my “line of country.” “*Faute d’autres choses;*” or, as I once heard it facetiously Anglicised—“for want of other shoes,” I might stand on the top of a mountain, to see hounds run round its sides and base; but if I did, it would not be for any thing like enjoyment, but to indulge the morbid gratification of feeling unmitigated wretchedness, in comparing it with, and calling back, recollections of scenes where proper country, proper men, hounds, horses, and proper condition, made me feel a good deal nearer heaven than when perched some thousands of feet higher than I ever before was.

We must not set it down as decided fact, that we are better judges of horses than men were a hundred years ago; nor must we consider that such men were really unacquainted with what condition meant, or the means by which horses were brought into it; for



we are perfectly aware that no horse could run a four mile heat in usual time until he was in tip-top condition ; and as very many years ago we know the Beacon has been gone over in as short time as since that period, men in those days—no matter how they did it—did most certainly get horses into the finest condition ; if they did not, their horses must have been better than we have them now, to have enabled them to run, as they unquestionably did, if not so well prepared. We know that in those days five, six, eight, even ten miles have been frequently run ; this surely requires proper condition ; and the condition horses must have been in to run such lengths, would, I conceive, not do very badly for Leicestershire. Let us not, therefore, be arrogant enough to say, as I have heard said, “ Our forefathers knew nothing of condition.” They knew all about it ; and, where wanted, produced it in its best state. The only difference between them and us was, and is, this : they wanted condition in their Race-horses, and they got it ; they did not want it in their Hunters, so did not put it in practice ; if they had wanted it, they would



have applied it to one animal as much as to the other.

I have certainly seen some nostrums and modes of treatment attributed to trainers of olden times, that carried absurdity to the highest pitch (if ever they were practised); but I should doubt their having been so, by any man recognised as a known and skilful trainer of his day. Beans were given to a considerable extent in those days; now we give them very sparingly, when they are given; but when horses ran such awful distances as they did formerly, in truth they wanted something to enable them to do it; and as in former days postmasters found Post-horses could not stand their work without beans, when Race-horses went all but a stage too, possibly—nay, I should say probably—they required them as much as the other. I have heard of raw eggs having been given to Race-horses of times gone by; and suppose they were. As I never tried them, I am not prepared to deny any efficacy they might be supposed to have possessed. I have heard them recommended to human beings, so they might make a horse run like



the D—l, for all I know ; but as I found my horses did pretty well without them—why, I eat them myself. Many things might be equally laughed at, as being unnatural to the horse. Quære, is not whiskey unnatural to him? yet I have seen it given in Ireland, and taken too by horses as well as men. I have seen it given a horse between heats. Is gin, ale, sugar, and ginger natural to a horse; yet my Hunters soon learned to take it, and would have taken it every day, if it had been offered them. One thing I believe; the generality of horses will not eat “oysters:” I infer they will not, from the following anecdote:—

A traveller arriving at an inn very wet and cold—(not the inn, but himself)—found the fire so surrounded he could not get near it, nor could sundry hints induce a movement to give him any benefit from its warmth. He rang the bell. “Have you any oysters?” “Plenty, sir.” “Open a dozen and a half, and bring them to me, with some pepper and a lemon: you need not lay a cloth.” The oysters came; and after squeezing a drop of lemon juice on each, and a proper sprinkling of pep-



per—"Take them on the dish as they are, and give them to my horse." "To your horse! sir?" cried the astonished waiter. "Yes, just show him the dish; he will pick them up." "Very well, sir," said the man, chuckling at the idea of seeing the horse take his unusual treat. "Well," said the other travellers, "we must go and see your extraordinary horse; does he often eat oysters?" "No," most veraciously said the traveller; "I only order them for him on particular occasions." Off they went, and the traveller ensconced himself most comfortably in a chair before the fire. Presently, in came the waiter with the dish of oysters, followed by the disappointed party. "Your horse won't touch the oysters, sir: as soon as I showed him the dish, he snorted, so I was glad to get out of his stall." "Never mind," said the traveller, "they will do for my supper; and as I am getting warm, you may now lay my cloth." The other travellers saw the hoax that had been played on them, so walked off.

We of the eighteenth century have certainly fair right to claim the merit of adopting the true system



of keeping a Hunter in condition, namely, by keeping him at home—that is, from grass. But we must not consider the system as a discovery, or as perfectly new: our ancestors practised it where they knew its effects were desirable; they did not turn Race-horses to grass. It may be said they could not do so, such horses being entire: granted; but we do not hear that they turned racing mares to grass—indeed, we know that they did not; they knew well enough that continued hard feeding was necessary to the condition of the Race-horse, but they considered it was detrimental to the sound duration of his constitution. Whether, on an average, it is so or not, I do not believe has been clearly decided or proved; but supposing it does, like other stimulants, more or less bring on a predisposition to disease, the causing him to make exertions that were beyond what he is in a state to bear, would injure his constitution still more. With less stimulating feeding, and more moderate work, I doubt not but, as an animal, he might last longer in a healthy state, but certainly not as a Race-horse. We hear of our ancestors riding a horse for twenty seasons: this,



it may be said, speaks in favour of the old plan of turning them out; it really, however, does not; it only shows that the horse, like any other machine, cannot be expected to last as long where the wear and tear is great, as where it is more moderately used.

The great mistake our forefathers made in the treatment of their Hunters, was, they treated them and their Race-horses far too differently; but such horses were at that time quite a distinct animal, and the treatment was as distinct; fifty years since, the only horse, except the Race-horse, that was in real condition, was the Poster, in a first-rate posting establishment. These were really in condition, and much more fit to go with hounds than were Hunters in the best hunting stables. Perhaps I mention, as a time when such was the case, some what too late a period—I do not mean as regards the Post-horse, but the Hunter; but at the period I mention, had a man wanted to do a gallop match of a hundred miles in five hours, with ten horses, he would certainly have made much more sure of condition to do it, by selecting from a



Hounslow or Salt-hill post-stable, than by borrowing an equal number of Hunters from his friends.

Our forefathers went a good deal on the old-fashioned contented plan of "letting well alone," and if they got a thing to answer well *enough*, with them it *was* enough. This was a mistake; nothing is good enough, if it would do what we want of it better, by being better. If a Hunter merely somehow brings a man in when a fox is killed, he is not good enough, at least not for the hounds he was ridden with. If it is admitted, which it is at all hands, that formerly horses did not get into condition, that is true and proper condition, before nearly the end of the season, such horses were not well enough, surely. I should say, therefore, that hunting men of those days were far more to be blamed for carelessness, obstinacy, and prejudice, than laughed at for ignorance, as to condition. We will suppose that their Hunters carried them to hounds, as they were bred and treated at that time, with about the same degrees of ease or distress as Hunters carry us in the present day. The good people of that time were really under circumstances, as to being



better carried, that we are not; they were aware their Hunters were not in the best condition they might be, they were therefore to be made better, and they knew how to make them so; so if they chose to be indifferently carried, it was their own faults, for they had the remedy in their own hands. Now we know of no means by which we could improve the condition of Hunters, in first-rate stables. In fast countries, they are brought as near the Race-horse in point of condition as they well can be; it is not therefore with us, that our horses are well enough, and therefore we are contented with them as they are; the truth is, we do not know how to make them better. In saying this, I only allude to Hunters under first-rate management; for under other, there are many Hunters going, who it would be very easy to put into better condition, but very difficult to see in worse. To gentlemen owning such, I dedicate and address what I may say about the proper condition of Hunters.

I hold it certain fact, that no horse can continue long in condition at any work, if he does that work



in distress. Strong exercise, strong exertion, and strong work, all invigorate, if properly administered ; distress debilitates. I may be asked, is not a Race-horse sometimes distressed by a long and fast sweat ? No doubt such might be his case, if in the hands of a very bad trainer, but never in those of a good one. The moment anything like distress occurs to a horse in training, that horse is over-marked, and the trainer over-rated as to ability, who permits it to occur. Not to subject any horse to distress, we must be careful that he is in every way equal to the task set him ; he must be equal to it, and should be above it in strength, wind, speed, and powers of endurance, at the time ; if he is not, he will be distressed, and mischief more or less will be done. A Hunter, then as a commencement, should always be above the weight he has to carry ; the being so gives him a similar advantage that he will derive from great speed, namely, that if judiciously ridden, he has always spare exertion left in him. I like rather large horses, though I should not recommend such to others, but in liking large ones as Hunters, and it is only for Hunters I do



like them, we must take care there is no Coach in them. I have occasionally seen such thunder along in a surprising way, but I hardly ever saw one of those surprising ones carry a man pleasantly, or like a gentleman, our being surprised at such unexpected effects, is about as flattering to the horse as our saying of a man, in extenuation of his usual deportment and appearance, "I assure you his manners in society are far from bad," suppressing the inward reservation of "for such a beast." For myself, I can only say, do let me have something at the cover's side, that looks like my knowing what a Hunter is, if I throw myself into a muddy ditch afterwards, in excuse for not going as long as the surprising brute I have alluded to.

In the next place, we must inform ourselves of the country the horse comes from, and the kind of rider he has carried; if the first is a thickly enclosed one, or the rider one of the mere "well enough" sort; if such a horse is taken into a flying country, and is ridden by a man who thinks nothing well enough that is not forward enough, it will take a season's



seasoning before such a horse will go in it, and keep his condition; and not then, if his speed is only such as qualified him for the Ghee Who country he came from. Now I have done most things to be done on a farm—sown, reaped, mowed, pitched, stacked, thrashed, driven and held plough. I object to neither when on foot, but I swear by Agricola, I don't bargain for holding plough on horseback. I must say, I do like to see a mane before me, that looks as if it would be no incongruity to plait it; but then if we reject anything of the coach in a Hunter, we must still more eschew anything of the weed. A weedy thorough-bred is bad as a Race-horse, but if he cannot race, he is absolutely good for nothing; neither would ever keep up to the mark as to condition; the one because want of breeding would make pace distress; the other, because any moderate hunting weight would distress him also. We will suppose a Hunter to have been selected, well up to the weight he will have to carry, and that at the time he is purchased he is to the eye and touch in good condition; if we want to keep him so, the first thing is to learn under what treatment he became



so, for it is such circumstances that must direct our treatment of a new purchase.

If I was shown a horse, as a Hunter, at the end of a season, and saw him with more flesh on him than it could be expected he could exhibit after (say) four and twenty weeks' hunting, so far from thinking it any recommendation to him, I should strongly suspect him of having been lame and laid by; of being an unpleasant or bad one, and so but seldom ridden; or of being so thorough a slug, that it was next to impossible to get any exertion out of him. Horses may have, and should have, even after a season's hunting, flesh enough on them to make them look healthy and comfortable in themselves; but if they have taken their fair turn of hunting days, and have gone well, the shape of their muscle will be pretty strongly developed. If, on the contrary, I ascertained that a horse was one of great powers of speed and endurance, but had been hunted in a slow country, or by a very slow rider, his looking even fat would be no objection; on the contrary, it would be a recommendation; for if, having been thus used and ridden, he was



only, as regards flesh, at a proper medium, no doubt he would get below such standard in a faster country, and in the hands of a more forward rider. If, on the other hand, I saw a horse lower in flesh than I could wish, I should naturally suspect him being a bad, or, at least, a delicate one; if, however, I found he had been badly—that is, unfairly—ridden, or had been hunted oftener during a season than a horse should be, we should have no reason to condemn him, for with fair usage he would most probably get and keep in proper condition. In what I have remarked here, I have alluded to a horse that I suppose to have been shown singly; if he was one of a stud, the case would be widely different; for here his being in higher or lower condition than his companions must arise from some cause that would be in his favour, or against it. If I saw a stud, and they were all unusually high in flesh, I should feel quite satisfied they had not come very often during a season; for it is not probable a man could have got together six or eight horses of unusual hardihood; if, on the reverse, they were all below the mark, he must be a



very unlucky fellow if he had got the same number all of them bad ones; so the fair inference, in justice to the horses, would be, they had all been unfairly treated in some particular; but even in such cases, if one deviated greatly from the others in condition, I would get at the cause, if it was to be ascertained, by appeal to the honour of the owner, the cupidity of the groom, or, what in no few cases would be more to be depended on, the word and opinion of persons who had seen the horses hunted.

We will conclude that most men wish to see their horses in good condition: some, like myself, are not contented unless their Hunters are (in stable phrase) "fine as stars," and all but fit to race. Positively, if a man would keep Hunters for me at his expense, if they were to be foul in their colts, and soft in themselves, I would not ride them. I might be told, after such assertion, that I am not fond of hunting—not a true sportsman: possibly not; I am not asserting that I am, or treating the reader with a treatise on the perfectly uninteresting subject of my pretensions or predilections, further than relates to



the subject in hand, namely, proper condition of Hunters. I fancy I know when they are in such condition, how to get them into such, and how to keep them so; knowing this, and that without condition a good horse becomes what is tantamount to a bad one, I merely, if I cannot ride horses in proper condition, claim the humble privilege of staying at home. I can easily conceive that many men would derive gratification from going to see hounds on a cob; and if they did this from having grown timid, old, or infirm, or, what is ten times a greater affliction, grown poor, I should applaud and admire their philosophy; but if a man can, or would, derive pleasure from attempting to ride to hounds on horses out of condition, I would hold his taste about on a par with that of a man who could drink two bottles of cape madeira after dinner.

I have heard many men say they preferred getting, that is purchasing, a Hunter in the spring, as they could then make certain of what his condition would be in autumn. To a certain degree they could—that is, they could make sure he had been properly treated



for five months ; and if he had been regularly hunted and fairly used during the last season, somebody would be to blame if by the end of September such horse was not pretty near the mark as to condition ; but if that horse had been soft fed during the foregoing year, I can tell the reader, though five months might, and ought, to make him look well to the eye, and be in good form as to carcase and quantum of flesh on him, it will be quite the end of the hunting season before he will be in tip-top condition ; and if a young one, and it is his first season's hunting, he will not then be in the same perfection as he will be after having eighteen months' corn in him, his substance will by that time be somewhat like that of the diamond, hard to work on, and it will be our own faults if we do not bring him up to something like proper polish. Then it is something like pleasure to walk into one's stable, where, if we shut our eyes, the narrow but firm crest of the neck, the springy feel of the muscle, induce a chuckle at the idea of how little pace will be likely to alter that which by pace has been brought to its proper standard : then, longing



to see what we *feel* is perfection, our eyes are gladdened by the sight of blooming coats, that “though varied in colour, in beauty may vie.” May those who can truly estimate such things ever enjoy them!

It may be asked, is such a state natural to the horse? Certainly not. Is a London season natural to man? I conceive not quite; but he seems to like it pretty well too, and does contrive to keep the game alive, and himself alive; and if ever a wish springs up that being so may cease, it is only where the former has ceased long before. It is habit, not nature, that in most things influences the happiness and comforts of living beings in different situations: the fish cannot be happy on land, or man under the water, simply, or chiefly, because neither can breathe out of their native element; but enable a man to breathe, and put him under water where a ship was sunk laden with a very rich cargo, and he (or I at least) would be very happy, though, having enriched myself, habit would induce a wish to return to earth; yet I am not quite sure of that either, if I was forced to leave all the treasure behind me; for a



snug berth under the Pacific, with all the good things of life about one, is better than a berth on earth, if compelled "to bear the oppressor's wrongs, the proud man's contumely," &c. &c. &c.—But there is no hunting—at least, no fox-hunting—under the Pacific; a very cogent reason for coming up, if you know you have hunters in the condition I have described. "But I have not." Oh, then, dive again, by all means.

If a Hunter is purchased of a dealer, the prospect or possibility of his being got into real condition by the time hunting commences, is not to be estimated by his being bought of *a* dealer, but of *what* dealer. In judging of such prospect, we have two things to take into consideration: first, is the dealer a man on whose integrity we can rely? and, secondly, is he one on whose judgment of what is the true condition of a Hunter we can rely? for I can assure my reader that there are dealers who are no more judges of this than is a hard-riding fox-hunting farmer, who never visits London, a correct judge of the necessary and fashionable qualifications of a lady's park hack; and



on the score of integrity, dealers vary just as much as do any other men of business, though it should seem, by the following fact, some persons think otherwise.

I was calling only last week on a friend, whose rank is that of deputy-commissary-general: our conversation turned on the peculiarities of a mutual friend, a commissary-general: one of these peculiarities is dabbling in the purchasing and selling horses, and those not quite of the first class. My friend the deputy-commissary-general reprobated this *penchant* of his superior officer in words nearly as follows:—"It is most extraordinary his doing this; it is laying himself open to the charge of being a horse-jockey, and, *of course*, a rogue." Now, having seen no little of commissaries, both at home and abroad, I could have retorted on my friend, that a man feeling as illiberally towards a class as he did, might insinuate that the same conclusion might be deduced from a man being a commissary. Now, as I am not saying I have seen roguery in either—or, at all events, am not stating the amount of it—my friend will not be offended, I am sure, should he ever



see these sheets, and find me affirm that I never saw more peculation or roguery in dealers' stables, than I have in the department of which he is a very meritorious member. This is not saying I have seen such in either.

A merchant, if he ever sees this, may chuckle, and hold it a fair hit at the commissaries: if he should, I might probably quote "*Quid rides;*" for, as a class, "*de te fabula*"—perhaps he may know the rest.

In purchasing a Hunter of a dealer, I should most unquestionably go to men most accustomed to deal in such horses, for their judgment would be good: they know what is a Hunter, or a horse likely to make one, and, in accordance with the time of year, have him in about the state he ought to be; for he may, and probably will, for appearance sake, be a little higher in flesh than might be desirable, and getting this off may retard his being in proper form for a month longer than if he had been in the hands of a stud groom; but he will "have that within which passeth show," and will not be—as are most horses sold for carriage work—all blubber without, and fat within.



Some men like buying four year olds to make into Hunters : such practice is very well for those who like it, and a pretty penny it will be found the one out of three (if you have luck) who turns out superior will cost by the time he is six : but no man, I can conceive, would be visionary enough to expect a four years' old horse to be in proper condition the same season he is purchased in. I may be asked, how, then, are two years' old, as Race-horses, in condition? My reply would be, they are not in condition ; they are in a state that enables them to run a short length now and then ; but this is not condition for the horse, though it is for the colt. The three years' old is in condition ; but even he, in point of hardness of constitution and muscle, is in greater perfection at four ; he is then all sinew and muscle, and the difficulty of getting a sweat out of him shows the old oats have done their duty ; but we must not compare the fixedness (if I may be allowed such term) of the stamina of the colt bred for a Hunter, with that of the one bred for a Race-horse ; the latter, at four years old, has been eating corn for three years and a half, so at



that age he has consumed as much as the ordinary horse has at six ; he had acquired a Hunter's constitution by the time the other was first taken from the pasture where he was bred. The racing colt had been corn fed, broke, ridden, exercised, worked, sweated, and raced, ere the other knew what a gallop meant, that is, with a man on him.

The nature of the soil, or rather the herbage that soil on which a colt is bred produces, I conceive goes very far in forwarding or retarding his being got into hunting condition. It is a received opinion, that the being so early corn fed produces the large description of Race-horse we see in these days : I am in no way prepared to controvert or disposed to dispute such opinion, though I am not certain it has been incontrovertibly proved to be the case. That plentiful feeding produces large size, I doubt not ; but I am not clear but that, for mere size, we might produce as large an animal on abundance of rich succulent pasture as we do on oats. If a horse is of a large breed, as the Cart-horse, for instance, large he will be, if plentifully fed and comfortably housed, though only



fed on grass and hay: colts so fed will be big enough, at three years old, for Meux's dray, if they are of a sort bred for such purpose. Possibly a thorough-bred colt might be very large thus fed also, but no Race-horse would he be. Absence of such pasturage, and substituting for it the short sweet grass of the paddock—and that, of course, in very small quantity indeed—and, above all, corn, brings the racing colt into the natural, or perhaps we may say artificial, form of condition before any other means are adopted to make him still more so.

Every man used to thorough-bred stock, is quite aware that there are many soils on which it is impossible (or, at least, has hitherto been found so) to breed Race-horses. I am quite sure such soils would be very much against the colt designed for a Hunter. I do not mean that it was so against the coarse slow two days a week Hunter of former days, when having (in the then slang stable-phrase) "a good bread-basket" was held as a great recommendation. But the "gun-barrel" instead of the bread-basket carcass is wanting to enable a horse to go nearly steeple-chase



pace across country ; a horse may be in very good plight as an animal, with a carcass like a Cart-horse, but with such he cannot be in fine condition as a Hunter ; and distended stomach, and bowels, producing a disposition to inactivity and plethora, is a very bad state to keep a colt in, who, as a horse, will require qualifications for which such state quite unfits him ; and if such state and habits are those permitted to exist during the first three years of an animal's life, the change to their direct opposites must take great length of time, infinite trouble to ourselves, and inconvenience to the animal. Such mode of rearing might do, and indeed does do very well for the large Carriage-colt, for his future work will be quite different to that of the Hunter ; but even Carriage-horses are now got into as good form as Hunters were a century ago.

We do not find any animals who depend on their speed as their protection, denizens of localities where rich pasturage abounds. The red deer, or stag, crops the brown heather or the scanty blade that grows in its vicinity ; the ibex and chamois pick their food



from the top or side of the Alps and other mountains, and the antelope is only found in an arid soil, producing but very scant pasturage; the ox cannot thrive and do well without bulk as to food. Be it natural or artificial, the different effects of the different feeding between him and the other animals, renders their appearance and habits as different to the eye as their size. The large description of superb ox reared in the neighbourhood of Florence, shows enormous bulk and strength. The bison of the prairie, unwieldy as he looks, can, from his more scanty feed and errant habits, exhibit, when he pleases, considerable powers of speed. If then, in a wild state, repletion produces indolent habits, and moderation active ones, I conceive each has a similar effect on the animal in a domestic one.

I should always wish to see horses, most particularly very young ones, on going into work, have in (stable terms) "a good bit on them," that is a good bit of firm sound muscle. But bulk and fat produce no stamina while on or in, but a great deal of trouble to get rid of, and neither should be permitted to ac-



cumulate on any animal in youth, that we intend for fast work when brought into use. Of the two, I would rather purchase a colt shewing indications of not having had sufficient food, than one convincing me he had been permitted and accustomed to gorge himself; an inordinate appetite is to be acquired, and colts or horses accustomed to quantity are hard to be brought to be satisfied without it, and we all know that the greatest possible amount of nourishment in the least possible bulk, is the great promoter of proper condition in Hunters. I consider that no animal will thrive in a dissatisfied state. If, therefore, a horse, like some men, has so indulged an inordinate appetite, that he is never satisfied till he feels his belly full, as such to the extent such gluttons would wish, cannot be allowed in a progressive state towards condition, or after it is attained, it shews that this, among other reasons, is one why, as I have ventured to state, we cannot breed a Race-horse on rich pasture, and why a Hunter should not be bred on such.

As I before said, going in distress, or going at ease, makes all the difference in a horse keeping up his



condition. Whatever exertion an animal is unaccustomed to, he will feel more irksome than will the one habituated to it, and it will generally be found that in changing the exertion to which a horse has been accustomed, to such as he has not, he will, more or less, fall off in condition, unless the change be to exertion less severe than the former; and even then he will not at first derive the advantage from the change that we might expect. For instance, carrying sacks of coal from a barge to a wharf, is much severer labour than walking without such load; yet many a man who does the former for hours together, would be tired if we made him perform the very trifling feat of walking five miles under the hour, though he merely carried a pair of walking short-drawers weighing two ounces. The regular pedestrian, however strong he might be, would be equally distressed in carrying the coals for the same time; neither would keep their condition in such exertion as they were unaccustomed to. Aware of this, if I wanted a Hunter for a very hilly country, I should very greatly prefer one bred in one. He gets accustomed to



hills even as a foal, and will go both up and down with ease and safety, when the horse bred on a flat can do neither; he would be alarmed in going down and tired in going up, and under such influence condition would certainly suffer. And, on the contrary, a horse having got into the short and collected stroke necessary to get up hill, and the pottering kind of gait that ensures safety in going down, would, till accustomed to the change, soon shut up, if forced to extend himself over a fast flat country; the different mode of fencing would distress him, even supposing he could accomplish it. In hilly countries great care is necessary on the part of the horse; going up hill, he cannot clear large leaps in a swing—he must in some way “dog them.” In going down hill he must make a one, two, or one, two, three of it, for if he should land with much impetus, he would probably roll headlong down the declivity; such a horse would soon be exhausted by flying nearly every fence he came to. He would clear a ditch and bank, or bank and double ditch, in any country in *his* country way, which would be by jumping on the bank, taking a look at



the fine prospect before him, and then jumping off again ; this mode would, however, give us a very bad prospect of keeping a place with fast hounds in a fast country. Thus each horse does well in his own —does well for his master as a Hunter, and well for himself as to condition. Change their country, and for a considerable time neither would do either.

I have been induced to write on the proper condition of horses for different purposes at the request of friends, some of whom declared candidly they could not get their horses, or some of them, in condition ; my object, therefore, is to show that such friends need not in all cases blame their own stable management or that of their grooms, as sometimes causes exist that they neither know of, or think of, that militate against their horses being in the proper condition they wish ; at least, I have found such to be the case.

In writing anything on the subject of field sports, or horses, I venture my own ideas and opinions, founded on practice ; I do not consult the written authority of any one, so, of course, do not expect or intend what I say to be taken in that light. I am



quite aware I could get much information from the writings of those better informed than myself; but if I did, and promulgated such information, I should be only at best retailing to my readers what has been said in better language by others. If in any thing I say, it is found that men conversant with such subjects agree with me, I may, in such cases, presume I am right; where men of ability, with as much practice and experience as myself, differ from me, I can have no doubt I am wrong. If they have not that practice and experience, a glimpse of hope remains, that from that circumstance I may be nearly right still.

Having mentioned circumstances that do not always strike a purchaser, as militating against a horse readily getting into condition, or keeping so, if he has attained such proper state, I will suppose one to have been bought that does not labour under any drawback of the kinds I have mentioned, and will suppose him of a fair age, not less than six, if intended to be regularly hunted with fox-hounds the same season he is purchased. If he was hunted last season, and has been indulged in his box from the



day he saw his last fox killed—the first week in April—he will be, or ought to be, somewhat high in flesh; we will suppose ourselves to be in the last week in July, our horse not having been grass fed, but merely having had green food enough during the summer to act as a natural alterative. We have not, as formerly was the case, to set about cleansing his inside, as a kind of Augean stable. What he chiefly wants is being got in form and in wind: he has had corn enough to keep his stamina good, and his flesh tolerably firm, and we only want to increase his allowance of oats, to meet the exercise and work he must get, to bring him up to hunting mark. We commence by mashing him for twenty-four hours, which, supposing him to have had soft green food, will well prepare him for his first dose of physic; if his constitution is of a medium character, the quantity, that is the strength of the physic, must be regulated by what we know or guess will be its effects. Six and a half drachms I have usually found enough (though a groom rarely thinks so); in giving a second dose, he will certainly require longer mashing, and probably stronger physic.



Whether a third should be given a week after the second, or kept to be given afterwards, depends on the visible effect of the two doses; formerly, all Hunters got their three doses in succession, nor was thus treating them quite as preposterous as some persons may suppose, for in those days, whether the horses were fat or thin, they were all grass-fed alike; and if the physic was judiciously given, so as to operate on each horse properly, and only properly, it would probably require as many doses to clear the stomach of the abomination it contained in the thinner horse as in the fat one; and even in those days, though grooms, after the hunting season was over, were in a great hurry to get grass into a horse, they knew well enough, ere another began, the sooner they got it out of him again the better; shewing the grass system to be a system about as sensible, and to be commended, as would be a man, instead of taking his pint of sherry, swallowing two pots of porter, and then taking an emetic to rid himself of the inward nuisance. We now give physic, not as a primary step to get rid of what is within as regards food, but what is with-



out and within as regards fat; and holding very properly this to be a better mode of doing so, than submitting a horse to exertion, with a body and fulness of habit that would, in the first case, be detrimental to his legs, and in the second to his lungs and constitution. We know inflammation to have a leading tendency in the constitution of horses artificially fed; and physic *before* inflammation commences is the best safeguard, though in many cases all but certain death, when it has seized the unhappy sufferer.

Grooms, in former times, said they gave physic to make “the fat ’uns thin, and the thin ’uns fat;” and they were not far out either, absurd as the idea might appear; for physic really did this, by getting that out of one animal on which he had got fat, and that out of the other on which he had got thin; a tolerably cogent reason, I should say, for not placing horses in a situation where they must all fare alike, and for keeping them where we can make the fare and treatment such as suits the constitution of each under our care; and this can only be done by their



being corn-fed and hand-fed. While we have them in this state, if we cannot keep them in proper condition, as resting-horses or working ones, by proper feeding, stabling, grooming, physic, tonics and alteratives, either we are unfit to keep Hunters, or such Hunters are unfit to be kept.

There are unquestionably two sorts of fine condition ; that is, fine condition to look at, and fine condition to go ; for instance, we will suppose twenty horses of a first-rate hunt coming to Tattersalls' for sale, very late in May or early in June ; they have all been bottled from early in April. Six weeks' rest to horses accustomed to constant work does wonders, and the stud groom must be a bad one if in that time he cannot get them all in such form as to look well, and, long corn fed as they have been, to feel well also. Doubtless in fine condition such horses would be to look at, and not absolutely in bad condition to go, but certainly not to go as they could six weeks before, though, perhaps, among the number some might have then been a little "pen-feathered," others a little light in flesh, and others not as playful as they would



show when listening to "The last time, for a hundred-and-fifty," bang goes the old spliced-banded, cross-banded, and transversely-banded hammer, back starts the horse. "Take care, he'll kill some of ye," cries a well-known voice. "Up," brings on another lot, the coming and going horses neigh a recognition, little thinking it a last adieu. "*Sic transit gloria mundi*," sigh I, and "*sic transit*," the stud.

Supposing horses to have got through such physic as each may require, by the end of the first week in August, we must be sad stablemen indeed if, by the first of October, our horses are not fit to go any where, that is in any country, so far as condition is concerned.

As I am not now writing directions or advice on mere stable management, but a general comprehension of condition,—what militates against it, and what brings it to perfection,—I shall treat on these matters in a general way as they affect the horse, leaving the minutiae and common-place parts of the groom's mode of conducting such to himself.

Horses having gone through their physic, begin a



regular course of walking exercise. On the subject of this preparatory exercise, I perhaps differ a little from some persons. I am no advocate for it as a mode of reducing superabundant flesh, and for this reason, I dislike all kind of exercise for the horse that jades him, makes him listless, or tires him by its monotony. I consider walking exercise, to the extent many persons carry it with their horses, produces the three evils I have mentioned, and many others: the chief advantage of walking exercise I hold to be keeping the horse in the open air; it also quiets very hasty and fidgetty horses, and brings the delicate ones to their appetite; but we might walk a strong-constituted one till he was as dispirited as an over-worked ass, before we should reduce firm corn-grown flesh on him.

Every trainer of pedestrians would, I know, be at once in arms against the little stress I lay on walking exercise; and possibly, if I was a fat man, would say, "I wish I had you in my hands; I would show you the effect of walking exercise in reducing flesh." Much obliged; but, in the first place, I have been at



such fun often enough, and know what it is as well as you ; secondly, I am a thin man ; and, thirdly, I am not a horse, however close I may come to a near representative of his.

Now the trainer alluded to is quite right as to the effect of walking exercise on a man, and I like reasoning on analogy ; but in this particular there is very little between man and horse ; and from a cause that may not strike him, which is this ; we will say a fair walker, as a horse, kept up to his pace, can walk four miles in the hour : all the forcing we could use with him would not get the same horse to do another half mile in the hour ; if hit, he would break into a trot. The walk of a horse on the road is a uniform pace, and he would not, perhaps, vary five minutes, as to time, in doing his four miles on a level road, if we tried him ten different hours : we cannot force him into strong exertion in a walk ; we can a man, as much so as in running. As an instance of this, we will take Charles Westhall, the walker and runner : supposing him to be taking a walk for his amusement, or to see a friend at Turnham Green, he



would probably, being at his leisure, walk at a rate of from four to four miles and a half per hour; but if he chose it, he could do the four miles, and leave himself time to take a glass of wine and water, leisurely under thirty minutes. He in training can be made to walk at a pace that renders it the severest of all exertion: we could not make his contemporary flyer, Voltigeur, do this—that is, not walk till the pace produced strong exertion, or at all acted on the wind, unless we walked him up the Devil's Dyke. We cannot make a sound horse blow in his walk; his properties in that pace do not enable him to do so—or, at all events, he won't—I believe could not; for, however he may beat man in stride by galloping, while the other runs, man can beat the horse all to nothing in stride in his walk.

I know of but three healthful modes by which we can get flesh off a horse—namely, physic, strong exercise, and sweating: now we cannot make a horse take strong exercise in walking on level ground, with a light weight on him—we can only make him leg weary. There is a way by which we may reduce



flesh by walking, I admit,—and where legs are in a very doubtful state it is very well to resort to it,—this is by very heating clothing ; but if the legs of a Hunter were so bad as to render this indispensable, I should scarcely think it worth the trouble to get him into hunting condition ; and his legs must be very bad indeed if they cannot stand a gentle trot on proper ground ;—a kind of exercise that, with moderate clothing, I greatly prefer, to crawling a horse about under a feather bed, or something like it. We all know that sweating, by whatever mode it is brought about, reduces flesh ; but by increased pace, sweat or not, we get increased action of the lungs, and this conduces to clear the wind.

In preliminary exercise, I much prefer the moderate trot to the canter, for these reasons : hasty horses are not so much excited by it, so go more quietly ; it accustoms horses to go safely and pleasantly in that pace—a great desideratum in a Hunter ; and as cantering and galloping always distresses one fore leg more than the other, I think it good economy in legs, when galloping is not necessary, to give each



leg a fair share of work,—and this it gets in the trot.

We have now, we will say, had a stud of Hunters at walking, trotting, and occasional cantering, or very slow galloping exercise, for a month; we must now increase our pace, and think of sweating them: the groom looks his horses carefully over; one or two particularly strong-constitutioned ones, though they may have had three doses of physic, may be so little affected by that and the moderate exercise they have had, that before they are put to work in earnest, even a fourth dose may be wanted; those that had but two may want a third, and all of them, more or less, will be benefitted by moderate alteratives, prior to the time their coats begin to shift. Of these I have found antimony the best: in many cases I have given arsenic, increasing the quantity every second day, for ten days or a fortnight; but in such cases I would recommend others, if unaccustomed to its use, to consult a veterinary surgeon—for it is not a medicine to be played with. Some horses, on first coming into work, will show little excrescent pimples on the



skin—these are usually of no consequence, and will go away of themselves—some, nay, many, grooms immediately fly to the nitre bottle, a most favourite medicine with most of them; I in most cases greatly dislike it, as I do quantities of vetches in summer: if a man wishes to thoroughly debilitate a horse, let him give plenty of both—he will shortly be weak enough to please any body.

Physic, exercise, trotting, gentle gallops, and alteratives, must now have prepared horses for a sweat; this at first must be very slow as to pace, and the horse clothed up, both in accordance with the temperature of the weather and as to what we have seen of his readiness, or the reverse, to sweat; the length he goes should be regulated by seeing when he appears to sweat sufficiently, this the groom will see by riding up to the horse while going; as a general rule, the best I can give is, when the water trickles down his arms towards his knees he will scrape well, and here let me caution persons unacquainted with sweating horses against a very mistaken notion they may entertain, which is, that some horses only re-



quire a "gentle sweat;" this is true, but a gentle sweat does not mean, as some might imagine, a *half* sweat; every horse that should be sweated at all, should be sweated profusely; a gentle sweat means the pace should be comparatively gentle, and that sweating should not be prolonged or encouraged after the horse will scrape well; the wet should run in a comparative stream before the scraper; losing this impure fluid opens the pores of the skin, and prevents ill effects from the exertion the horse has gone through; if we do not get this from him, all that would be got by a half-sweat would be, the blood would have been heated to fever height, and the impure juices we want to get rid of would have come to hot water pitch, and then have dried again into the body: the next morning the half-sweated animal's mouth would be and feel hot and dry as a lime-kiln; and if fever does not follow, some one must prevent it who is a better groom than the advocate for half sweating. The number of sweats, the severity of them, and the days of interval, a good groom will decide on by the constitution, the form, and general attributes of



his different horses. Hunters do not require usually near the same number of sweats as does the Race-horse ; for in the first place, hunting condition, though it should approach it, is not required to be racing condition. As something like a clue as to the frequency of sweats in a Hunter, I should say if he is, in racing phrase, "doing good work," eight days between his sweats is about a fair average ; but it must be borne in mind that the pace, length, and clothing required to sweat a horse, when come to his height of condition, must be very much increased from what was done when we got a kind of dirty half glutinous frothy impurity instead of, as now, all but clear water out of him.

As regards sweating, the case is quite reversed between Hunters and Race-horses : with the latter "the old 'uns" require by far the most sweating, for two reasons ; in the first place their flesh is more hardened on their bodies, consequently more difficult to get off than is that of the younger horses ; secondly, they have to go longer lengths and carry greater weight, so they must have as little of their own to carry as



possible ; and it is to be recollected, as stated when on the subject of Race-horses, “ the old ’uns ” are only four or five years old, consequently they have all the juices of youth still in their bodies. Now with Hunters it is not so ; what a hunting groom calls a baby as a Hunter, is an “ old ’un ” in a racing stable ; and horses considered in their prime, say eight, nine, or ten years old, as Hunters, are sires as Race-horses, and many a horse is going as well as ever he did across country, whose contemporary in age, as a Race-horse, has arrived at the honour of being a grandsire.

In men it is usual, as they grow older, that they increase or diminish in weight ; this, however, I have observed, is only the case with such as merely take common exercise ; but I have rarely observed a hard-working day labourer who did not exhibit a spare habit in age ; it is so with horses. A pony that had carried a Vicar of Wakefield, and grown old with his master, would probably grow fat as age induced him, and he might be allowed, to leave off habits tending to make him otherwise ; but I do not recollect to have seen an old Hunter, in hunting condition, in a regu-



lar fox-hunting stud, that was not more or less spare in form. Consequently, such a horse merely requires a sweat or two to clear his skin of impurities on and under it; with such a horse the sweat should be got out of him as quickly as possible by warm clothing, and not prolonged exertion, as the last would tend to reduce what flesh he has on him, and of which he has none to spare; for this I can tell my reader, though young and aged horses will often throw up flesh faster than we may wish, if we once get an old horse below himself in flesh, it will be found a work of time to get him up again, and the chances are very much against it ever being done—and rarely indeed if he is kept at work. Old horses, like old men, that are used to it, will stand a good deal of hammering, if we keep the steam up in them, but if we let that down, the machinery stops, the impetus is lost, and they come to a stand-still.

It used to be the system to let horses work themselves into the best form with hounds. What was the consequence of this? horses were going for two or three months when not in condition to go, and one day's



hunting in such state does or did what it took considerable time to undo, or rather undid what it took perhaps a month to set to rights.

Get a horse in what condition we may, though he may be fit to run for a plate, we cannot get Hunters to be *as* fit to get through a long run at the beginning of the season as they will be afterwards—they are not accustomed to such lengthened exertion; the least therefore we can do is to bring them to a state of wind and stamina that they can go a burst with ease; for if they are distressed by the first quarter of an hour, I should anticipate but little pleasure in riding them afterwards. I do not mean that because a horse may from any cause be a little blown that he will not recover from that, a few minutes more or less, in accordance with his condition, will enable him to do so; but if his condition be such as to have caused him to be distressed, it will take days to recover from the effects of it. Such, I conceive my reader will agree with me in thinking, is not the proper condition of Hunters. I have endeavoured to shew what is—have pointed out what is likely to promote



or impede their being brought to such state. I have supplied the raw material—have shewn the general mode by which it may be worked into an article to meet the wishes of those who intend to use it. I have shewn, or attempted to shew, that without being wrought up to a certain pitch of perfection, it is all but valueless: the proper workman to bring it to this must be found by those possessing the material in its crude state; I am writing information for, figurately speaking, the importer, not instructions for the artisan; that has been written by others.

But in less figurative terms, to return to Hunters: it is quite clear that to bring them to the state Hunters should be in, master or man must understand how to do this. A master with good strappers if the first knows what he is about will do; if not, a good stud groom will do; or where only three or four horses are kept, a good intelligent man will do the same thing, perhaps well enough for ordinary men and purposes; Men, of whom there are many now who keep but one horse and no groom, have but one alternative that I know of, which is to send their horse



to the best hunting livery-stable they can find. I am not authorized to offer advice as to any man's procedure in his amusement, but if I kept one horse, I might be allowed to give advice to myself, and it would be in two words, "don't hunt."

We will now throw aside canters, gallops, strong work, sweating, sweaters, boots, muzzles, scrapes, "*et hoc genus omnes*," that we require as accessories to condition in racing and hunting stables. The boots we will not have, in technical phrase, "at any price;" for the kind of horses we shall not look at would be quite unfit for their several purposes, if they required them. The muzzle we trust we shall not want to prevent their eating us; and it will rarely be wanted to prevent their eating what is proper for them—but the condition we must have. For as I have somewhere seen dogs classed as "Puppy, Mongrel, Whelp, or Hound, and Curs of low degree," so the horse, as Racer, Hunter, Ladies' Horse, Hack, Harness-horse, Costermonger's or Cart-horse, all are raised in price, looks, and utility by condition; each has his proper condition, and if not in such state,



labours under disadvantage both to himself and owner. It will not, of course, be inferred from my saying this, that I mean they need all to be in the same condition; but each should be in such state as to enable him to do his allotted task without being distressed by it. I will now take up

### THE LADIES' HORSE.

To be more explicit, I mean the Ladies' riding horse, and now-a-days such horses comprise a considerable number of those in use. I have ever considered that of all the horses in use, without any exception, the horse a lady rides is the one that calls for our most scrupulous attention, both as to his appearance and attributes. Ladies do not want the same qualifications in their horses men do; they do not want extraordinary speed, uncommon endurance, or wonderful powers of any sort; at least, no lady does who entertains the very laudable wish of being more, or at all events as much, admired for her higher attributes as she is for her qualities as a horsewoman. If, therefore, a man is seen by the cover side, or any



where else, on a very plain horse, he is quite excused (nay, shows his sense) if sacrificing looks to uncommon qualifications. He may, for the same reason, ride a vicious, restive, unpleasant, or even unsafe horse; but as easily acquired qualities are only wanted for a lady's use, it really shows either a niggardly disposition, want of knowledge, want of attention to her comfort, and proper appreciation of the value of woman, where a lady is permitted to ride a horse not in every way suited to the light task he is usually called on to perform. Beauty, the finest condition, perfect good temper, graceful action, a fine mouth, and, of course, indisputably safe going, is all that is wanted; he might, for any purpose where great performance is required, be perfectly worthless; it would be no recommendation to him that he could do, or had done, fifty miles in three hours and a half, when no lady, at least no gentlewoman, would permit such a trial of him to be made, much less would she participate in any such feat. If a man complained to me he had a horse that was not worth a farthing as a Hunter, or even as a Road-horse, to go any dis-



tance, my questions would be, is he handsome? would he carry a woman? If, on the contrary, a horse had been bought for a lady, but proved restive and vicious, I should ask, is he really a good one? if so, I should say, "I'll buy him, I dare say he'll carry me, or some other man."

Why I know not, but in the early part of this year I saw more awkward goers, and those in very middling condition, under ladies in the park, than I ever remember to have seen in any preceding season; and yet no horse should be in proper condition more than one to carry a woman;—he should be so for appearance sake, otherwise the lady looks like a gem in a tasteless and common setting; nor do we wish her to look as if she harassed or starved her horse to death: he should be in high condition to induce him to do his work pleasantly, cheerfully, and safely, neither of which will he do if in a dispirited state.

A really good goer will certainly go well, whether in condition or not; but there is a wonderful difference between the quick, cheerful, and elastic step of a horse in perfect health and spirits, and the same



horse if either in under condition, or in a state of fatness that makes exertion irksome to him: the want of readiness, and elasticity of action, brings more horses on their nose or knees, than all the stones or inequalities of the worst roads. It matters not whether the want arises from general bad condition, or fatigue, at the time being; where and while it exists, the horse will not go with perfect safety: we may keep as vigilant an eye on the road we ride over as we please—may have as good hands as ever felt a horse's mouth—unless he has the will and the power to go safely, and, in case of a mistake or blunder, to prevent himself falling, all our efforts would amount to nothing, as regards preventing the catastrophe; condition is not merely wanted in the horse to cause him to look well, or be capable of great performance, but it is really wanted to insure or at least promote safety.

It may be objected that high condition may cause a horse to be troublesome to a lady to ride; if a horse is thus troublesome, he is either not in proper condition for her use, or is not a proper horse for her



to ride. It is not necessary for a ride in the park, or an airing any where else, that a horse should get his five or six feeds of corn a day ; he will look just as well, and be in quite proper condition for such exercise (for work it is not), on three ; but if a horse's temper or temperament is such that he will not bear feeding enough to keep him in looks and stamina, in proper state, without being violent or disagreeably hasty, he is not fit for a woman. He may be a very valuable horse for purposes where he must get high feeding and hard work, and probably would be so ; many horses' spirit is so high they cannot bear idleness, or rather the absence of work to keep them down ; very valuable such qualification is, but not in a lady's horse. He would be one among the many horses who are not in condition, from not being suited to their purpose ; such a horse must be under-fed to keep him under ; what then would be the consequence, though he might have sufficient spirit left ? the want of proper feeding would cause him to sweat in a mere canter up Rotten Row ; by such treatment his *temper* would (figura-



tively speaking) be in condition, but his stamina sadly out of it; he would, in fact, be a good horse thrown away on a purpose for which another, perhaps very bad one, would be quite what was wanted.

But though I consider what, in speaking of horses' qualities, we call a "bad-hearted one"—in other words, a regular "cur"—when called on for severe exertion, is quite good enough for a Lady's Park Hack; should a lady hunt, it is quite a different affair: here she not only requires a good horse, but a very good one. Not that ladies ride as hard as men, nor will we suppose a lady would persevere with her horse one minute after she found he ceased to go with ease to himself; but a horse with a woman on his back should *always* be at his ease; and to be this, even with their more moderate treatment, a horse must be a good one; for in a very moderate run, though a horse may not really go in distress, he must be a very good one to feel quite above himself, or rather his work, during the whole of its continuance; this, however, he may be, with a lady's riding, if he



is a superior horse—but not unless he is so. A man may, by greater nerve, greater strength, and less feeling, drive a half-beaten horse through or over his fences, during the latter part of a run, but a lady cannot do this, nor would I suspect her of attempting it; so, to prevent it being called for, a woman's Hunter must be exceedingly clever, exceedingly good, and, above all, in tip-top condition. Men, with all their knowledge of country, of hunting, and horses, and with all their nerve and strength, are often obliged to get their horse along as they can, and think themselves well off if he does it “any how;” but this would not do in the case of a lady. We, as men, laugh if we see one or the other get a purl; but we shudder at the bare idea of a woman getting a fall: her horse must, in great measure, take care of himself, and in so doing so, of his rider also; this he can and will do while fresh, but no longer. If, therefore, we are particular in having our Hunters in first-rate wind and condition, in order to keep in the foremost rank, we must be quite as particular in that of the Lady's horse, to enable him, with her riding, not to



feel any thing bordering on distress—for on this her safety depends.

There is a vast difference between high *temper* and high *courage* in horses: by high temper I do not mean a bad one, but a temper easily roused to a state of excitement; and a horse possessing such is a most improper one for a lady, and for this reason—to keep down his temper we must reduce his courage; and if we do, we spoil him. If he is merely high-couraged, and has a placid temper, high feeding will only affect his stamina, and that in a desirable way: his temper will be just as placid in high condition as in low; his spirits may be more exuberant in the one case than the other, and he may be somewhat playful; but any little playfulness arising from mere animal spirits is quite different from the impatience or irritability arising from high temper: the effect of the one is perhaps a jump or gambol, and it is over; but we can scarcely tell what, or where, the effects of a high temper, if excited, may lead to. The horse with a high temper is, perhaps, as easily subdued by fatigue as any other; the high-couraged horse is not: the placid



temper is no more to be roused by trifles than is the high courage to be subdued by occasions or causes where such courage is wanted; and such are the desirable attributes of a Lady's horse. We can keep him up to a state that enables him to bring all his powers into use, and yet feel perfect confidence in the equanimity of his temper; in short, whatever may be the exertion we require of him, we can always venture to have him in the state I hold all horses should be—namely, not only equal to, but somewhat above their work: if they are not, I do not call them in proper condition.

### THE HACK.

Not to go too far back in point of dates, the Hack of 1800 and the one of 1852 are as different as two animals can well be, both being used for saddle purposes on the road; or rather as not being animals used for racing, hunting, or military purposes; for, in point of fact, road riding we have none at the present day. No horse living required higher condition for his work than did the Hack of the last century; for



no horse was exposed to more fatigue than were Hacks in those days; and far more indomitable courage was called for in the Hack than in the Racer or Hunter. The latter have both of them much excitement to keep their courage alive; but nothing but sheer game, and high condition, could enable the Hack to keep up his spirit, and carry as safely in a journey of sixty miles, with nothing to encourage or cheer him in his solitary labour. But the regular Road Hack, like the Road Coach, is no more; and the Hack of the present day, instead of having severer duties than most other horses to perform, leads now a life of mere exercise; consequently, any thing that is pretty, has showy action, and is safe and quiet, is good enough for the Hack. The chief attention, therefore, that he requires, as regards condition, is just to keep him in health, and in that state, as regards flesh, that sets him off to the greatest advantage in point of appearance.

We now turn our attention to



## THE CARRIAGE-HORSE.

A somewhat indefinite description of an animal I must allow this would be, to a man who had not, from observation and habit, learned to comprehend at once the description of horse alluded to by such definition; for, no doubt, every or any horse drawing a carriage might be called a Carriage Horse; and as a carriage is a wheeled vehicle to carry persons, it is only habit that at once brings before our recognition the particular animal I allude to. Yet the sort of animal, though at once recognised by the term, and familiar to our sight in 1852, and during the preceding years of the present century, is no more like the one used in and before 1700, than was the light, nearly thorough-bred, team of a fast coach like the old lot that used to draw the road vehicles that breakfasted at Hounslow, dined at Reading, and supped—and, indeed, remained for the night—at Newbury, the passengers hoping that, God willing, they should be in Bath the next night. I have heard even my father call it all but wonderful that a man could *posi-*



*tirely* take an early breakfast in London, and supper in the good town of Water-cure. I remember the Englefield coach leaving at six, and arriving in London at nine, about nineteen miles; very well horsed this same coach was for its pace, the team being about on a par with some of the best Tilbury now sends about London in his vans. I quite remember being on the box on one occasion, when behind I and the coachman sat three good-looking, sprightly lasses. They truly enough said we were going slowly; so the coachman, to show his gallantry, “sprung” (forgive me for using the word on such an occasion) his team a bit—for the “springing ’em” brought them to about seven miles and a half an hour. “There, ladies!” said he; “I suppose you like that?” “Very much,” was the answer. “Yes,” replied he, “but my horses would not.”

Very properly, for the time being, “Coach,” not “Carriage” Horse was the term formerly used for the ponderous animals employed when flambeaux shed their molten favours on all the hind parts of the in every sense of the term family



coach; for it was not only capacious enough to carry the whole family, but had carried the family from which its later owners sprang; a venerable specimen of antiquity, far more certain, in its day, to descend to the descendants of its original purchaser, than, in later years, has been the venerable, though little venerated, mansion that has been the birth-place of the progenitors of a faster age. Our old friend Oliver talks, or writes, of scenes "where rattling chariots clash and torches glare:" these were, perhaps, somewhat later times than when the family appendages of all sorts were so certain to descend to expectant heirs; but I believe the term "rattling," that our bard made use of, did not mean to convey the idea of, in modern conception, "rattling down Park Lane at the rate of fourteen miles an hour." I (without meaning disrespect to bye-gone times and personages) rather conceive the rattling alluded to the noise, not rate of going; when want of Collinge's axles produced the former, bad pavement increased it, though it quite prevented the rate adding much to it.

From this it is quite clear that not only was a very



different horse used for carriage purposes in former days to those in use now, but that the pace was as different as the horses, is equally certain: it consequently becomes indispensably necessary that the condition of the animal must be as different as the animal himself, and the pace we require him to go.

Every one knows that we do not want such specific strength in carriages destined to run on smooth roads as on rough and uneven ones, consequently do not require the same specific strength in the animal to draw them, under such different circumstances; our horses of the present day, therefore, in point of weight after them, have two advantages—roads that enable two to draw the same carriage with as much ease as four could on roads of former times, and carriages of a far lighter construction to draw. Thus far the task of the Carriage-horse is rendered easy enough; but to set against this, comes that far greater test of horses' quality—"Pace." How much meaning do those four simple letters convey! what vast consequences arise from the effects of that one item in the category of those exertions we require in the



horse—pace, by which, in its conventional term and spirit, means going fast, while it creates great pleasure, also creates vast increased expense. Pace must always involve great wear and tear in what we use and require it from, and in the purse also ; pace brings the horse to a stand-still, and, in figurative language, often the estate to the same predicament. It elevates the Hunter from fifty to three or four hundred, the pair of Carriage-horses from one hundred to three, and, finally, the horse from three hundred with the noble on his back to three pounds and the costermonger's cart behind him ; and, to speak in metaphor, it *has* brought the noble to similar vicissitude. To “ go the pace ” requires peculiar attributes in horse and man ; to “ stay ” at it requires stamina in the horse and in the purse also ; and to enable either to do it, requires each to be in “ proper condition,” or neither will stand it.

It is known to all men conversant with the peculiarities of different classes of horses, that the higher bred the horse is, the higher condition we can bring him to—that is, condition for a fast pace. We read



of Coach-horses of former days being "round," "plump," "smooth," "sleek," "pampered," and so forth; but we never read the word "condition" as applied to them, and intending to convey with it an idea of the same state it does now; nor in such days, and for such horses, was such height of condition wanted. A very moderate state of wind sufficed for horses to jog-trot about London streets; and, to show their want of condition prevented their faster progression, whenever or wherever any like pace was wanting, the Posters were called into request, whose better breeding and superior condition enabled them to do it. After this, came on the era of improved roads: this caused nearly as great change in people's inclination for quicker transit as has since that period the railroads, and a far greater change in the horses used, and in their condition. So soon as increased speed was wanting, a different kind of horse became wanting; and fortunately he was of a kind that could be brought into such condition as had become necessary.

It may be asked, why could not the condition of



the stronger horse have been improved, so as to have enabled him to have kept his footing in public favour? There is no doubt but his condition might have been greatly improved; but if it had, his powers of speed would not have kept pace with the public desire and taste, and this want of powers of speed would have prevented his ever attaining that proper and high condition to which a better bred horse can be brought. There is, probably, no quadruped whose speed could not be increased by proper treatment and practice; but there will always be greater improvement in the speed of naturally fast animals, by training to it, than can comparatively be made in the slower one; and if we attempt to make the latter at all vie with the former, we immediately produce distress, and then, as I before stated, condition retrogrades instead of improves: besides this, there is a peculiar something in high breeding, for which we cannot satisfactorily account, that enables the thorough-bred horse to improve on such training as no other horse can bear. We know it is so, but we know no more: it does not arise merely from the



fact that fast animals improve more in proportion than slow ones ; for if it was, how can we account for the following fact?—for fact it would be found, and has been so.

We know that there have been many cock-tails in racing stables quite as fast as many of the thorough-breds there ;—probably could, in speed, for a mile, beat them. We will suppose one of these thorough-breds to have come to his best general racing form, and that we have brought the cock-tail to what we know is his best condition : we run the two a mile or mile and a half ; the cock-tail wins. We will go on with strong work with both another month : the thorough-bred will be no better for it ; for if he was as well as he could be before, he could not be improved by this extra work ; but how would the cock-tail be by his work having gone on as has the thorough-bred's ? I think I will venture to say, run them together again, the thorough-bred would win in a canter. There is a peculiar power of bearing continued fast work in the thorough-bred horse, that none else possess ; and the nearer to being



thorough-bred the horse is, the more this peculiar attribute is manifested.

It may be very truly said, we do not want the condition of the Race-horse or Hunter in the Carriage-horse; we certainly do not, nor do we want him as highly bred, but we want Carriage-horse condition, and we want breeding enough to enable us to get that condition; and if people will go fast enough in their carriages to call for clear wind in their horses, we must not only get horses fast enough to please such owners, but horses well bred enough to be got in such wind as they will require for the pace they are expected to go. A lady may not be aware that if her carriage comes through the Horse Guards, and goes up to the Hyde Park Corner gate, at the rate of twelve miles an hour, it plays a very fast tune on the pipes of her horses; it is nearly a mile and a quarter on the rise all the way,—a fair galloping pace for a horse in training, when not in actual work. The Race-horse does this with (say) seven stone on him; her horses with a carriage, and, as a medium, five persons about it, making a weight of about 1850 lbs. behind them.



This really not only calls for condition, but “proper condition,” in Carriage-horses.

I think I may say that George the Fourth, as Prince of Wales, the then Lord Sefton, and Sir John Lade, were the first, or nearly so, who introduced a far higher breed of Carriage-horses than had been before used; most of their horses were highly bred enough for Hunters, in ordinary countries, and many of them for any country, and, but that they were mostly larger, or rather higher, and more leggy than Hunters should be, were quite good enough, in high condition enough, and many fast enough, to have left their harness and gone with hounds. Yet, as relates to the Prince, fast as his horses were, and they were all picked ones for his purpose, and good as their condition was, their royal master was far too good a judge of horses to trust to these high, leggy horses, in his fast excursions on the road; for this he had his private Posters, and pretty nearly well bred enough, and in condition enough, to come to the post these horses always were; the lightest of our Hussars, on their fastest horses, only coming from just by



Turnham Green, where the relay waited, were mostly tired to death before they reached Hyde Park Corner, while the Posters did not give a puff among them. Why was this, the former only coming six miles and a half, the others ten and a half? Simply because though the former were well bred enough, fast enough, and in condition enough, for Troop-horses, they were neither enough to enable them to keep near the Posters without severe distress. It matters little whether wind, and the power of enduring continued fast pace, be wanted on the race-course, in the hunting-field, or on the road, in or out of harness, where it is wanted it must be *had*, if horses are expected to stand such work; and to do so, nothing will suffice but “proper condition.”

Persons often complain of their horses falling off in condition; this arises from three causes: not being by nature fit for the work they are put to, not being properly treated while at work, and quite as often, from not being properly prepared for it; and all three are indispensably necessary to enable them to perform it.



A person may say, supposing he may be convinced of the truth of what I state, that I do not tell him how to keep his Carriage-horses in condition. How can I, unless I know the kind of carriage work he wants them for, or now uses them for? Let me know this, and, so far as my practice and experience can avail, I will afford the best information in my power. "*Sic Itur ad astro.*" I will begin with the first class of Carriage-horses, and suppose a person keeping such; the number kept will not matter, provided enough are kept to do the work with proper regard to sufficient exercise of their powers, and no more.

Whether a person using such horses breeds them, or purchases them of the breeder or dealer, matters not as to their subsequent performance; the chief thing is, by some means, to get the sort suited to what is required of them. If moderate pace and action is all that is asked for, such horses are readily found at moderate prices and will suit such owner, and do their work in a satisfactory way; if very fashionable action, which is lofty action, and moderate pace is wanted, the same breeding will do with a consid-



erable advance in price. If great speed is desired, without such superabundant action, we must get far better breeding, and this may be got at about the same price as the last; but if we want (in dealers' phrase) "extravagant action," and great speed too, this raises the Carriage-horse to an almost nominal price; and nothing but high breeding will stand the wear and tear of very high action and great speed combined; for as it is well known that showy action militates against speed, the horse that combines both is only occasionally met with, and when he is, commands a price commensurate with the rareness of the production of such an animal. Having been fortunate enough to find such a horse, from whatever source he comes, the first thing to learn is how he has been treated; if merely in condition for the eye—which I may here say is the case with all such horses, if young ones—if we put him to immediate use we shall certainly find him get "small by degrees," but by no means "beautifully less;" he will come from a fine magnificent looking colt, or horse, to an attenuated, overgrown, rawboned animal, and what



six weeks has undone, it will take six months to set to rights. Now when this young horse was purchased and put to work, he had plenty of flesh on him and to spare; all that was wanted was to get off what was superabundant by physic and gentle exercise, and by hard feeding to render what was left firm enough to bear such moderate work as common prudence would tell us to be suited to an animal commencing his routine of labour; it is, therefore, nine times in ten, want of thought, or want of judgment in the owner, that produces the evil he complains of, as regards his horses; namely, their getting out of condition. Select them with judgment for what you want them to do; be sure they are properly prepared to do it before they are called on to perform it; give them then plenty of oats and a proper share of work, and horses will *not*, barring casualties, get out of condition. When owners find their horses begin to show symptoms of not doing well, let them, if their judgment is good, immediately investigate the cause of it; if they are not judges in such matters (instead of wondering "why such things are,") let



them consult some one who is ; he will most probably at once cause their wonder to cease, and rectify the occasion of their chagrin and the ill doing of their horses.

We will now turn to a different sort of Carriage-horse, one of less cost, though, as an animal, of quite as much value ; namely, one for purposes of real use in the ordinary acceptation of the term.

As is the case with all horses purchased for any purpose, the first step towards their keeping in condition is, suiting the horse to the purpose for which he is wanted ; and the sort of condition into which a horse should be got, depends also on the purpose he is to be applied to ; for if this is not done, the most careful coachman in the world will not be able to keep his horses in proper condition ; this is well known to Jobmasters, who take care to keep different sorts of horses, and those (though all in good) in somewhat different states of condition, to suit the different usages different customers would put them to. A man like (we will say) Mr. Gray, would ruin himself if all his horses were of the same family, same



value, and in precisely the same condition; he must suit the taste and wishes of all his customers no doubt, but he must not, in justice to himself, suit them at the expense of his horses, which would finally be at his own. Supposing I were a Job-master, (for I will not take upon myself to say what Mr. Gray or any other man might do,) and I was desired to supply a pair of very splendid looking, grand going-fast horses, and those in the finest possible condition, not only in stamina but coats,—if I knew such were only to be used by day for airings, the Park, and morning calls, and I was allowed to send others for night work, I should name a reasonable sum for their use; but if, on the contrary, such horses were wanted by a family who knew little, and cared less, about the proper treatment of horses—kept them out exposed to heats and colds by day and night—if desired to name a sum for the use of such a pair, I should name for the season the full value of the horses.

Cold, horses may be inured to; but heats, and then chills, no horse, at least no English, can be brought



to bear with impunity. In a general way, persons who keep horses for absolute use, must not expect to have as fine horses, or those in as fine condition, as those who only use them in such way as such horses and condition will bear; for where such condition is wanting, if attention is also, or at least not shewn, fine condition is soon lost, and so will be the fine horses, for they will become, from the havoc made with them, but ordinary ones, and then comes the expressed wonder that they are so. Oblige the lady expressing this wonder to walk home from a ball in her white satin dressing slippers, it would go far to relieve her from her wonder that her horses had got out of condition from having been exposed to as much improper hardship to them, as walking home would be to her.

Now horses may be kept in very good condition of a certain kind, and used somewhat roughly too, if brought to it by degrees; but though even they may be in very proper condition, it will be but proper condition for rough horses; but even they, though they will stand hard work and cold, will not stand heats and then cold. Keep a good seasoned wear and tear



horse full of corn (and beans, if he wants them), and let his pace be moderate, he will not hurt much by exposure to any moderate weather. He has, probably, a good thick coat on his back, and if this is not much wetted by sweat, he will stand a north-wester; but the fast-going, thin-skinned, and fine-coated horse, though high breed and high condition may prevent his sweating much, if he gets his blood heated and is then exposed, is sure to suffer, and very probably fatally; therefore, though there is a "proper condition" for all Carriage-horses, the *same* condition is by no means proper for each of them.

I have said, that persons keeping horses for use must not expect them to be in the same perfection as to condition, as may those who treat them with more regard to retaining them in such state. This is quite true, but requires some little explanation, for there are some cases where the horse is kept for use only, yet that very use is the precise cause of the best condition; the Poster, for instance, as I have before mentioned, the Machiner in a fast coach, and many other situations in which the horse is placed. But be



it remembered, that though such horses are employed in useful purposes only, their owners are so well aware of the importance of condition in their stock, that care is taken that the animals are not used in any way likely to militate against this paramount object. It is where the welfare of the horse is made subservient to the use and pleasure, and perhaps ignorance, of his owner that the animal suffers ; and where such is the case, good condition is out of the question, or rather I should say, fine condition ; for there is a wide distinction between the two : for instance, the Marquis of Anglesey's carriage-horses are in fine condition, the rough and ready pair I have alluded to are in good condition. For this reason I use the term "*Proper Condition*" as the title of this book, as that embraces condition as regards horses in their different classes and employ.

There is a use to which an ordinary Carriage-horse is put, that requires some little (I might say no little) consideration on the part of their owners in selecting,—that is, horses for the use of medical men ; and these should be selected in accordance with the



habits of the practitioner—not his habits as regards his patients, but his horses. Those belonging to men of great celebrity and extensive practice, usually lead a very fair sort of average life, and the greater the practice of the master in a general way, the better is the life of the horses: his position induces him to wish to see good horses in his carriage; to have this, he well knows they must be well fed, and only properly worked. A private, as well as medical, friend of my family constantly kept three pair at work, and Posters were always hired if he went more than four miles off the stones; consequently, his horses always looked well, and were well, and went a good pace.

Now there are two stages in a medical man's life in which he drives faster than most of his brethren; these are, when he does so to enable him to get through his business, having a great deal to do; and in the other case, when he does so to have the appearance of business, but having very little to do.

In writing a play, if the author writes a particular part for a particular actor, it is technically called, "writing at him;" so when many medical men



drive fast, we may call it "driving at business;" there are now no few practising this rule, from want of other practice. It succeeds or not, as the case may be; so in this the medico puts himself in the case of a patient—that is, what he does kills or cures; his horses having their full share of the chance of the first casualty.

There is a particular description of horse that I consider as peculiarly adapted to the service of medical men, or others who want Carriage-horses for a similar kind of service; this is a moderately well bred, compact, hardy, quick stepping sort: the very large strong horse would be too slow, and the pace would distress him; the tall magnificent goer would tire himself in such service, and, most probably, also begin to hit his legs so soon as he was so; the too highly bred horse would be starved to death by cold while waiting at doors, after being warmed by exertion; the close, compact, weight-carrying, enclosed-Hip-country-like Hunter, about fifteen hands three inches, is about the sort I should select for real use in harness. Such have breeding enough not to be distressed



by pace for moderate distances, strength enough for any ordinary carriage, and stamina and hardihood enough for any ordinary usage; such I should select for a friend, wanting useful horses.

I have, in all I have written, said so much in favour of highly bred horses, that my reader may, or might, expect that, for the use I have described, I should have recommended a more highly bred animal. I must account for not having done so.

For any, and every purpose, where a *continuance* of great speed is wanted, I have ever found that nothing but the thorough-bred, or nearly thorough-bred, could stand it; but then he must be treated as such horses are; for though, in many respects, the blood horse is as hardy as any other, he is not so in actual exposure to inclemency of weather, for two reasons—he is totally unaccustomed to it; and if in condition, he is, in comparison with the coarser horse, about in a parallel situation with two men, one in a stout pea coat, the other in one of Mr. Nicol's Derby two ounce paletôts. For very fast work, in harness as out of it, the high bred horse has always been found



to beat the coarser bred one ; but where only moderate continuance of a fast pace is wanted, I should, for harness, prefer a well-bred to a thorough-bred horse ; for in such cases the merit of the latter is not called for, and there are points in ordinary thorough-bred horses that render them objectionable. To get a thorough-bred horse of size, substance, and action, fitting him for a carriage, a large sum must be paid, which would be money thrown away, where a half-bred would answer the purpose quite as well ; and, in my opinion, nothing looks worse, or more miserable, than a thorough-bred weedy animal in harness. In Race-horses, or Hunters, in very fast countries, we do not wish them to have any useless flesh to carry ; but we are not compelled, by the nature of the work of the Carriage-horse, to be thus particular with him in this respect, for two principal reasons ; in the first place, he has only his own weight and that of his harness to carry, consequently we may allow him a certain weight of flesh of his own ; and, secondly, though he will require good wind, he will not require that of the Racer or Hunter, but beyond this specific self weight



in the animal, drawing assists his propelling efforts, and in proportion with the assistance such weight affords him, is the exertion he must use diminished. Again, a merely good-looking, or even handsome horse, looks the better for being a little high in flesh ; the one that is faulty in shape and make, owes nearly all his passable looks to his ill points being concealed by the flesh on him ; and, farther than this, there is no doubt but that horses with a good bit on them, can stand exposure to weather far better than horses very spare in flesh. I am not recommending, nor do I recommend, fat on or in the horse, let him be used for what purpose he may, but I have a great dislike to bones ; well-developed muscle I like in horses for very fast work, but ill-concealed bones are quite a different affair. What I hold to be the proper condition of a Carriage-horse for any work, is (with a slight deviation, in accordance of the nature of the work) just such a state as would induce us to say, speaking of a Hunter, "He looks well, but is a little too high in flesh."

If a man wanted a pair of horses for his family's



use, to go visiting a hundred dear friends—to go looking for and at a hundred dear (in every sense of the word) shawls, dresses, and trinkets, — to take the ladies to parties, and all other night amusements ; —should a medical man for some reason (but no fault of the horses) wish to part with a pair that had been doing his work, perhaps a better pair could not be selected for such use as I have described ; they would have been seasoned to such degree of hardship as would be required of them ; and being so, would keep in condition, if treated as they had been accustomed to be. But if a nobleman, or any man who was particular in having his horses in first-rate condition, wished to sell a pair of his, should a medical man purchase them for his own use, I should suspect him of being in a state that would render it advisable to call in a brother Esculapius accustomed to attend the insane, or, as I once heard a very good sportsman, who kept a house for the reception of such persons, term them, “crackly headed ones ;” for it would be the height of ignorance of the nature of horses, insanity or folly to expect animals taken from tender



treatment to rough, to retain proper condition for any thing but the kennel.

On the many occasions in which owners have complained of the falling off (or the not getting) in condition of their horses, I have found that, in nine cases in ten, if it was a pair, or a stable of horses out of proper state, I could, with very little inquiry and scrutiny, find out the cause of the evil. With a single horse, detecting what is wrong is by no means so easy; the occasion of this is simple enough, and readily explained. A single horse may have every proper treatment given, and every attention shown him that the best judgment and the best groom can administer, and yet not thrive; when such is the case, the ailment must be in the animal, and this may be too occult to be detected even by professional skill, but it is rare that a man gets a pair with such hidden cause for unthriftiness, and he must be a most unlucky being if he has got hold of a stable of such; therefore, though in the case of a particular horse the fault, or rather misfortune, very probably, rests with him, I fear where two or more look



badly, and do badly, the owner must bear the blame himself. He buys injudiciously, or manages injudiciously, or permits others to do so for him; for if horses are suited to their purpose, and are treated properly for that purpose and themselves, they will look well, unless it be "here and there" one; and if he belonged to me, I should say, "You may be there, or any where, but you shall not be long here."

I can put up with a delicate horse if he is a brilliant one, and not wanted for hard and constant work. I have generally found very surprising horses for "a day," are apt to be not an every-day sort. I lately saw one sold at Tattersalls', for a sum approaching four hundred, that I know cannot come oftener than three days a month with hounds, and greatly prefers one day a fortnight. If any man, wanting a horse to hunt once a week, was to purchase the horse alluded to, could he expect him to keep in condition? he would be a dog-horse before half a season was over: this horse is a splendid *one* among a stud; but if the stud consists of one, he would be dear at a gift (*to keep*). This hint, with a little deviation,



applies to other horses besides the Hunter in question.

A friend of mine, a medical man, and, in a general way, no bad judge of horses (though, I must confess, a far better judge of gentlemanly manners), has lately purchased a Gig-horse; after driving him a week, he has found him, as he says, "going somewhat sluggish, has lost his cheerfulness, and is falling off in condition." My good friend had overlooked (till told of it) that he had bought this horse fat as a pig, and from a state of idleness; no wonder he was cheerful, when going out was a treat to him; but the treat being over, so is the cheerfulness, and so it will be till the oatmeal mashes, and possibly boiled potatoes, he had gloried in, have enriched the soil, and good old oats have invigorated the horse; then (and getting used to the fair and moderate work he is put to) he will be cheerful again, and so may ever be his master.

Some reader may be a little surprised to find me assert that action has a good deal to do with condition, but a little reflection will, I trust, convince him that



such assertion is correct. There is a kind of action that tends to fatigue, and another kind that renders progression as little fatiguing as such exertion can be ; therefore, two horses going thus differently the same number of miles per day, are not upon a par as to the effect of their work ; for whether we take one horse ten miles, and another twelve, or whether fatiguing action makes ten miles equal to twelve miles in point of exertion, matters not ; the one horse virtually, nay actually, does one fifth more work than the other, or, in other words, undergoes that much more exertion than his neighbour. So, supposing each animal's constitution to be about the same, each to go the same number of miles per day, and each to be fed and cared for the same, they cannot both keep in the same condition.

A lady who only keeps a pair may say, "I will have as fine a pair of horses to my carriage, they shall be as magnificent goers, and shall be in as fine condition, as those I see the Duchess of —— go to court with." All this no doubt may be had, and I should admire the spirit that actuated the determination ;



but I must tell the lady, that the *getting* a pair of horses precisely like the pair used by the Duchess, alone will not do; they must be treated and used precisely the same as her aristocratic neighbour's, or the similarity will very soon cease, and the lady would then find that a certain story about a frog and an ox, though written so many years since, carries its moral to this day. Great show will, in all things, call for great sacrifice of comfort and convenience, or money, and we cannot have it without: if we determine to have horses with extravagant action, we must either be extravagant in keeping numbers, or we must sacrifice some convenience of our own to suit that of our horses; for though going, in technical phrase, "with their knees up to their curb chains" looks extremely well, the exertion such action expends on show, the better (though less fashionable) goer keeps in reserve, and we can call upon him for it, if wanted for our convenience. Really good going promotes condition, because it permits a horse to go with ease; very extravagant action is against it, from its producing a direct opposite effect.



We will now look to single harness horses. We will take the Brougham-horse: such a horse, to be master of his work, and consequently keep himself in condition, should be of considerably more than half the strength necessary to the pair; not merely because the carriage is more than half the weight of the one drawn by the pair, but for a more cogent reason—he is always at work: he has no partner to enable him occasionally to draw himself a trifle from his collar. A pair, though it is imperceptible (if well driven) to the byestander, do give and take a little in sharing the work; but the Brougham-horse, if going a mile against collar, must lug at his load every step, till variation in the ground gives him a short partial respite. Fortunately these carriages are not usually taken long distances, or horses could not live that draw them.

I bought two some weeks since; the one for a lady, the other for a family. The first “neat as paint,” with—what is not often met with—true, yet showy action, and in the finest condition; the Brougham corresponds, as does all about the equip-



age ; all admire it, till they get a glimpse of its fair inmate ; then the eye has but one point of attraction.

The other horse I bought for a family ; and knowing he would be wanted every day, great part of each day, and not unfrequently at night also, I had to look for material to stand all this hammering. I found it, and a roughish material it is ; does not mind the battering, nor much the whip ; will work eight hours a day, and incessantly eat the remaining sixteen. I told my friends I would not catch him, if he was straying, for my own use ;—but he suits them. Each of these horses have kept their condition, because each was, and is, adapted to his situation, without which neither would have done so.

The condition of the Gig-horse, in years gone by, required to be very different from what it is now. I know of no work that tends to more jade a horse than long distances in single harness : take the most impatient horse that ever wore a collar, drive him long distances at the slowest rate he can be made trot, and in a very few days he will become as patient as could be wished. Supposing him to be a fast



horse, driving him fifty miles a day for a week, at the rate of ten miles an hour while he is going, won't do—it will put him out of condition, and probably off his feed, neither of which is what would be wished : and further, this might also make him still more fretful, after he got fresh again. Long-continued very slow work quiets an impatient, on the same principle that keeping him waking day and night tames a violent one—it acts on the animal spirits. Many a horse that would have torn himself to pieces in a coach working a stage, though it might have been a severe one, would shortly become perfectly quiet, and keep his condition, working a street cab. The being in harness so many hours together wearies the spirit ; a severe stage of an hour's duration only distresses the legs and general frame, both by the nature of the work and the animal fretting at it ; and no horse loses flesh and condition sooner than a fractious one. I like a horse a little impatient in single harness, for light work ; they are mostly pleasant to drive, and a certain degree of impatience usually improves action ; but the impatience that is caused by



a generous spirit is quite different from the fretfulness occasioned by a fractious disposition disliking the work he is put to. Speaking of a team, a horse may be impatient, and take the whole of his side of a coach, if not prevented; or he may be fretful, and not face his collar enough to draw a man's hat off; for such horse single harness is the sovereign cure, for there he must work, if he goes on at all; very possibly will work, when not irritated by excitement, and do well at such work.

The condition wanted for a Gig-horse now, is very different from what was absolutely necessary when gigs were used for long distances on the road. No one now drives his gig to Bath; such a vehicle, showing it was on a journey, would now be nearly as much stared at as was an old aunt of mine, when seen in her sedan chair nearly at Finchley Common. In those days single harness horses wanted the condition of Hunters; but now, when a Stanhope or Tilbury is rarely seen,—and if it is, a drive from Limmer's to Kensington Gore is about the extent of its journey,—little corn and a good deal of flesh will



answer well enough ; when before, half-peck feeds, plenty of muscle but no fat, alone enabled a Gig-horse to trot cheerfully into Newbury one night, and into Bath the next. What we may, therefore, call Tilbury condition, does well enough in London streets, or for such short distances as such horse-killing vehicles are fitted for ; but it won't do at all for the lighter and better-following plain grasshopper-sprunged ten mile an hour gig, or rather for the horse that draws it ; for if only in such condition, after going fifty miles, a horse would be found (as the friend I have mentioned said) to go “ somewhat sluggish, and” to have “ lost his cheerfulness.”

There are two states of *improper* condition, both of which tend to make a horse “ somewhat sluggish ” — too much work and too much fat. Fat, if only to a certain extent, being the effect of little work, renders an animal high in spirits, till he becomes wearied : gross fat makes him unwilling to make *any* exertion ; over-work produces the same effect ; and in single harness, being both able and willing to exert himself, is more required in the horse than in any other har-



ness, being both able and willing to exert himself, is more required in the horse than in any other harness work, for we have his individual exertion to trust to.

The work, and indeed life, of the Harness-horse, is, in the generality of cases, so wonderfully improved, and so far less onerous than it was, that it is quite unpardonable in owners now, to exhibit horses out of condition ; in fact, we are not in these days annoyed by seeing the wretched objects that used to disgrace our streets. That unfortunate animal, the Hackney-coach-horse, is no more ; street carriages we have, and in far greater numbers than in former times ; but the animals drawing them, with occasional exceptions, look, and are, quite equal to their work. The Hansom's cab drivers have a spice of the emulative in them, and if a good goer comes alongside them, in a gentleman's vehicle, a sound of the half four-horse thong over the ears of their wide-a-wake nag sets him going, and on such occasions two to one cabby gives the "go by." A little spare of flesh many of their horses are, but the coat and firm



muscle show oats are not wanting; it is the pace keeps down the fat, and, for real use, they are the better for it. These horses, on an average, I call in proper condition; that is, for a street cab, which is enough: horses cannot be in proper condition for all purposes; they may for all purposes of fast harness work, or for all show purposes in harness, but not for both at the same time. The splendid animal we may see standing in a private cabriolet at a club-house door, is in proper condition to stand there to be admired, so he is to go from St. James' to Knightsbridge Barracks, or Grosvenor or Portman Squares; the Hansom's Cab-horse would look nothing standing by his side, or in the cabriolet, but give both a twist to Epsom, and the aristocratic-looking and aristocratic-going two hundred guineas' production of Mr. Anderson's stable, though cheap at the money he cost for his destined purpose, would look as subdued as any other fashionable gentleman in distress, ere he reached the celebrated trysting place mentioned. Cabby would chuckle about as Frank Butler did on seeing Barbarian and Chief Baron



Nicholson contending, as their riders thought, for the palm of victory; "Wait a bit," said Frank; "Wait a bit," says cabby: each give their nag a shake, and go in and win. Good riding landed the worst horse the winner on the course: good condition brought, not perhaps the worst, but the least valuable horse, through on the road. Nor would this be all; our high (in each sense of the word) and aristocratic horse of fashion would, on his arrival, shew his fashionable habit in listlessly turning over the repast before him, to select, if possible, a grain to tempt his want of appetite. Cabby's nag rams his nose into his half-peck, clears that, is ready for something else, or ready to return his stage at a moment's warning; and without wasting his powers in action for show, slips over the ground in a way that surprises his passenger that each mile-stone succeeds the other in such quick succession.

Supposing such a case to have occurred, "This has given me a lesson," may say the owner of the Cabriolet-horse; "I am determined in future to have my horse in proper condition." If I overheard him say



so, I should take the liberty of saying, "My good sir, your horse is in *proper* condition." "Then how was it (he might say) that common Cab-horse went by me with perfect ease, and, I could see, could have beat me ten times as far, had his driver wished it?" "Excuse me, if I tell you it was because you put your horse to an *improper* purpose. In the first place, a tall quite half-bred horse, with peculiar 'up knee action,' is not calculated for a long stage in quick time; your horse gets barrack allowance, or tantamount to it, which suffices for barrack-work, or street work, and he is unused to severe exertion. The Cab-horse is higher bred, has, probably, been a Hunter —(some of these have been Race-horses); the Cab-horse gets as many oats as he will eat, and is daily accustomed to pace and distances; two horses so dissimilarly situated, are no match at the same work; and (say) fifteen miles at a fast rate, in single harness, with a heavy vehicle to draw, depend on it is no joke. Keep your horse in his proper place, he is proper, and his condition is proper for that; but if you want a twist to Epsom, you must get a proper horse and



have proper condition for it, or, like many others going to the same place, you will wish you had put faith in another horse."

Omnibus-horses, with the exception of some of the Paddington, and most of the Blackwall ones, are mostly, in proper, many in very high condition ; now with them, as with most other horses, this arises, in great measure, from the goodness of the roads they travel over. It is true, as a counterpoise to that, they take from twenty to twenty-four passengers, sometimes more, a most decisive proof of the little effect of weight when compared with heavy roads ; but this is not all, for owners could, if they chose it, give their horses such work as would reduce them to the state of the old Hackney-coach-horse ; but if they did, the horses would be unable to do their work, as people will now be conveyed, so they find that condition is, after all, the cheapest state to keep a horse in. Even in a cab, no one, but a person wanting sense, consideration, or humanity, would take one with a wretched-looking animal in it, when another, with a horse seemingly well treated in it, was to be had ; a good-looking



turn-out brings custom ; it brings work for the horse no doubt, but as to look well he can do but a fair quantum of it, the more work a man gets, the more horses he must keep ; and if two horses, each by his portion, produce a profit to the owner, three will produce a third more, and so on. No doubt, the owners of such horses have found this out ; so to their interest, more than their humanity, we owe the improved condition of the horses that draw us.

We will now turn our remarks to a description of Harness-horse, that is, allowing a certain latitude for the accusation, “ never in the condition he ought to be ;” fortunately, this horse is the last we have occasion for, as he conveys us to “ that bourne,” &c. &c., and from whence no one returns an account of how he was conveyed the last stage of his travel, perhaps travail in this world. We might suppose very little condition would be required for horses for such slow and sombre purpose, and certes very little condition it is he does require ; but there is a proper condition wanted to draw an apple cart ; many are in proper state for this ; but if we see an animal in a reeking state of sweat



from a gentle trot from Kensal Cemetery to Park Lane, it is not invidious to come to the conclusion that such horse is not in proper condition even for that ; and such state is no uncommon result of such exertion, if exertion it can be called. It may be said, such horses are of a bad sort in themselves ; I allow they are of the worst possible sort of animal called horse. I never saw one of their kind worth the velvet and feathers he carried ; but really, he might, I think, be brought to a state to perform his duties (though perhaps none other), without looking, not as if we had ridden him hunting only, but as if he had been hunted ; about the usual effect of bad condition in any case : but where this is the case, and the sort bad too, it may well be called “black work.”

I think I have seen as various sorts of horses as most men ; that is, I have seen and owned English of all sorts, Irish of most sorts, and seen numbers of Russian, Prussian, Austrian, French, Flemish, Spanish, Arab, Persian, and Norwegian ; a tolerable long category of different denizens of different countries ; but the most unmitigated brute I ever saw, take them as a



breed, are the Blacks we see used for funeral purposes. I will not even name the country they come from, for I dislike no country, nor the man or beast that comes from it, if he is a good one, but for these horses I have, as Shylock calls it, "a certain loathing that I bear" them; their prick ears, bull crests, straight shoulders, light carcasses, short rumps, bad thighs, and thick fleshy legs, are my abomination; but I will do them justice; they are rarely in condition to in any way counteract these numberless and wonderful imperfections. There are other horses of a sort of which I never saw a good one, but I never heard of one of this sort.

We will now descend lower in the grades of horses, and come to those used in tradesmen's light carts, and by costermongers; though, I must confess, I only call such lower in compliance with the general idea of the public, for I respect even many such costermonger's donkies as I have seen, far more than I do some of Mr. Shiliber's lot; I respect any thing good of its kind, and the more so if the kind be good.

Formerly, such a phenomenon as a butcher's horse



in anything like condition was not to be seen, or expected to be seen ; now we seldom see one that is not so. I do not give our useful friends the butchers quite credit for this improvement in the state of their horses from any peculiar feelings of humanity, but from seeing most horses in a decent condition, they have the merit, at least, of following good example ; and are, as it were, shamed into better usage of their horses than formerly was the case.

Our grocery is now brought to our doors in tilted light carts—not with the old road-waggon article used as a tilt, but with one black japanned ; the harness patent leather, where such leather is usable, and Day and Martined where it is not ; this requires a horse to match, and such horses they use. Those to keep in unison with the turn-out must look well, and to keep up good looks good condition is required, and the tradesman's porter who acts as groom to the horse, has learned the wonderful secret of keeping his horse in condition ; namely, complaining if he finds he is not of a sort to suit the work, and when he has got one that is, taking care he gets plenty of oats, is



fairly driven, and in not subjecting him to improper heats and colds ; the most knowing groom can do little more for an ordinary horse, hundreds do not do half as much.

Horses are by no means unreasonable in their demands on our care to keep them in health and ordinary condition ; very fine condition requires more care, no doubt, but then horses expected to be in such state are not exposed to circumstances to put them out of it. We certainly should want a suit of kersey or blanket clothing, and an oil-skin suit over those, if we wanted a Hunter to stand in a pouring rain in a cold night, waiting at a door ; but Hunters are not so exposed (nor, indeed, should any thing be but a Polar Bear), so the oil-skin suit is not wanted ; and if each horse is in proper condition for the usage he is subject to, neither will be more likely to lose that condition than the other ; it is the not attending to this that brings on the loss of condition so complained of. It is not because we see the well-attended Carriage-horse out at night, with his warm quarter-piece under his harness, and his water-proof half hood on,



and the Cab-horse without either, that it follows the latter will take cold and the former will not; the one will be as likely to suffer, and no more than the other, if both are in proper condition for their different vocations.

It may appear somewhat startling, if I state that pace (that is, a faster pace than was formerly demanded of horses) has done away with the exhibition of bare bones, so commonly seen when a slower pace was in use; but I think I can account for this seeming enigma. Although a horse going a very slow pace in a very light vehicle can certainly be kept on very little corn, indeed on none, and will look well, his work must not only be slow, but short; but there is a something in quick work that, short though it may be, cannot be got through without a liberal allowance of oats; without these the flesh on horses becomes so soft, that any unusual circumstance, as an extra day's work, or illness, cause it, in vulgar phrase, to "melt like butter:" this is seen at once if a horse in such soft state is put to any thing bordering on real work; so now all horses get a far



greater allowance of hard feeding than they did (I except the few Machiners and Posters remaining, as such were always highly fed). If a horse on hard feeding, gets a day or two of extra hard work, he may look a little "tucked up," but his firm flesh will not be visibly diminished by it, and a day or two of ease sets all to rights. It is not so with horses less liberally fed; thus the old Hackney-coach-horses were seen the wretched objects they were, though their pace was only a jog-trot; they had not corn enough to keep them up equal to their work, and, when once below it in stamina, wanted vitality enough to recover even the apology for condition they had lost. The very moderate price oats have been at for some years, has also wonderfully contributed to the welfare of horses; that is, of ordinary horses, every costermonger's pony now, more or less, gets his corn. Who knows, but if the present spirit of statistical policy goes on, the man may get his modicum of wine, from the same cause as his pony gets his oats. There is an old saying, that "the dull ass will never mend his pace by beating;"



perhaps not; but he will by oats: and again, though beating might not accelerate the pace of the DULL ass, it will that of the sprightly one. I have heard it said a donkey will leave oats for a thistle: I dare say he might, if he had eaten half a peck of the former, but not before he began them. I suspect those entertaining the idea of Jack's extraordinary preference of thistles to oats, had not tried him with the latter. Jack has been accused of being by nature stubborn, and indeed vicious. This is vastly exaggerated: he is knocked about by boys as a foal, so he learns to kick at them, to keep them off. He is then brutally used by men: he becomes sulky, and viciously disposed to them also. He hates his tyrants—who does not? and “hates any man the thing that he would not kill?” What is found intolerable, or unusually irksome, always produces a wish to resist it, even if the power is wanting. Work is irksome in the extreme, when the state of the worker unfits him for it: put him in such state as enables him to perform his task with moderate endurance, and he will do it willingly, more or less, in accordance with



the generosity of his nature. So far from the ass being, as I have heard asserted, an instance in which, and a creature on which, good care is thrown away, I hold Jack forward as one of my strongest proofs that "proper condition" not only alters looks, pace, and endurance, but even disposition.

I once made a bet that I would find an ox that should, in my gig, trot ten miles in an hour. From a circumstance quite unconnected with the bet, it did not come off; but I should have done it with ease. The ox was a working one, three years old, and of small size, very playful; and his trotting action, when loose, was extraordinary. I required four months to train my trotter;—not fearing his willingness or temper, but to get him in form and wind, and, above all, to get plenty of old oats in him.

We have often heard of extraordinary feats being done by ponies. I do not consider this in any way extraordinary; and I think we may fairly attribute a good deal of their greater powers of endurance, proportionably, compared with the horse, to their being more easily kept; so many that are in the hands of



persons who could not afford to keep a horse on full allowance, are pretty well kept as ponies. So, supposing their powers of endurance to be the same, the well-kept pony will beat the ill-kept horse, from such circumstance alone. So much for condition; for though the pony may not be in the best, if he is only in half condition, he is better off than the horse that is only one quarter towards it, and will beat him in the long run, whenever he meets him.

But there is another cause why ponies often surprise us in their performance more than horses, which arises from their deriving benefit from a cause that I have stated greatly promotes condition. Ponies, unless their beauty is conspicuous, are much less costly than horses; and as beauty is in no way necessary to performance, and as that kind of action that commands a high price is against it, a pony of uncommon attributes as to pace and endurance is to be got for a sum that would only purchase a very middling horse: thus the pony, put to a purpose to which he is quite adequate, must ever beat the horse put to one for which he is unfitted. We all know that size, in



certain situations, gives increased powers; a moderate Race-horse will beat the best racing pony, and a good racing galloway; but a very good ordinary Hunter would stand no chance at all against a superior racing galloway, though one was only thirteen hands and a half high, the other fifteen three,—that is, fifteen hands three inches; and why? the one was adapted to racing purposes, the other was not. Thus, a superior pony, going with ease to himself, will beat the larger horse going with laboured action—that is, action that does not suit the task or feat each engage in against the other. No animal, and I include man, can do that well for which he is not adapted; nor will or can he do well himself in the attempted performance of it, for a mere attempt it will be.

I think I am correct in saying, that (with possible exceptions I am not aware of) all small quadrupeds are endued with far greater proportionate powers of endurance of continued exertion than are larger ones; in fact, many of the smaller kind, without any reference to proportions, possess such attribute to the



greater extent. A fox-hound, for instance, would, I am certain, beat the best Hunter in the world, though both were turned loose, in a week's endurance of fatigue; whence this arises I do not pretend to decide; why it may be so as respects the fox-hound and horse, I think may be accounted for in this way—I consider the limbs of the hound are far stronger, in proportion to his weight of body, than are those of the horse. Why, among all the extraordinary experiments that have been tried, have all attempts at men using artificial wings failed? simply, because the muscular power of man's arm is not equal to the support of his body. I have remarked, that in racing ponies and galloways, when in training, and their bodies of course lightened, they exhibit more bone than does the full sized Race-horse—that is, more bone in span, in proportion to its length; and length wonderfully decreases strength, unless size is increased in adequate proportion, which in well-bred, that is, high-bred horses, I do not think it is. Thus, where horses carry weight for inches, I consider the balance greatly in favour of the low-measuring horse, though,



on the other hand, he loses the advantage of stride, yet, again, this is often made up by quickness of stroke.

But I must not go farther on this subject, as it would lead me from the one in hand. The observations I have made are intended to show that the pony, being in many cases fed better in proportion than the horse, and being in the same ratio stronger, is, in a general way, more competent to his task than is the larger animal; independent of this, it is quite clear that quick action distresses the tendons and muscle far less than a more elongated step; and I have remarked, in corroboration of this, that Race-horses when having, as a few have, a quick active mode of walking, keep longer clear in their legs than those with the usual lounging walk such horses get into. Keeping or exposing any thing to tension, tends to fatigue; hence the objection I have stated I make to very prolonged walking exercise for horses like the Race-horse, with elongated stride in the walk; and I am quite convinced, though I do not presume to convince others, that the foundation, or rather the cause, of after-failing in the legs, often originates in the



walk. I allude to Race-horses, or others, who may have contracted this mode of walk. But let us return to horses of a trotting sort.

It is a received opinion that horses can do more work, both as to distance and repetition of work, in harness than they can under the saddle; and, taking horses and circumstances both on an average, I am quite sure such opinion is correct; and the advantage they work under in harness, compared with saddle work, is far greater than it was in former times; in fact, two centuries ago, travelling on horseback was the only mode by which our ancestors could get across country; when roads were made, carriages got into use, but their progress was of necessity slow, and the labour to the horse great; so it is only within a comparatively recent date that the advantage of harness-work has been felt by the horse, for in bad roads he would perform his journey far more easily if ridden, than he would in harness; and again, the advantage a horse derives from harness very greatly depends on his style of going; if this is not adapted to harness-work, such horse will not do well at it, and will con-



stantly lose condition, for which his owner may be at a loss to account. The very thing that renders a horse safe and pleasant to ride, is just what would be against his working to advantage in harness ; namely, being, as we term it, “well on his haunches ;” he cannot well have a qualification more against him for draft ; whatever may be the weight he has to draw, it will be to him heavier than for a horse without this qualification, desirable as it is to a Riding-horse. We will suppose a man drawing a weight after him ; more or less he leans forward, oblige him to walk erect, he could not move the weight he was before drawing with comparative ease ; it is the same with the horse, if he throws himself on his haunches he involuntarily raises his fore parts, which is diametrically the reverse to what would take weight along : horses accustomed to harness find this out in time, and so soon as they have learned it and put it in practice, they become less pleasant and less safe to ride ; and this is why Riding-horses should not be much practised in harness, and why those used to draw heavy weights are seldom afterwards fit to ride. There is



another striking difference in favour, or against the harness-horse, in the form of his shoulders; those of the Riding-horse cannot well be too oblique, whereas for harness, the straight shoulder is far more in his favour; in the first place, it brings the chief bearing of the collar on the strong part of the animal, namely, on the projecting parts of each side of the setting-on of the neck, or rather on the setting-on of the shoulder. A collar setting thus straight, does not certainly set off the horse so much as one laying more obliquely, but it gives great increased power of draft; secondly, collars laying obliquely are sure to press more or less on the wind-pipe, consequently produce distress. I saw rather a singular instance of this not many days since.

Passing a public-house, I saw a horse in a loaded van standing at the door; he attracted my attention, from his leaning on his collar more than is usual in horses standing still; while looking at him I saw him stagger, and near falling; I guessed the cause; so laying hold of his bit, I chucked him up and back: he gave a peculiar lengthened respiration, and then



shook himself; the fact was, at the moment I chucked him up he was choking. His driver came out of the house, and from him I learned the horse had fell in harness several times before. His shoulders were particularly oblique. I remarked that he was not in such condition as I should have expected to see a horse, belonging to such a name as was on the van. The man assured me the horse was not overworked, was well fed, and that two more under the same care were, as the man said, "round as eggs." I have no doubt this horse always worked in a certain degree of distress, or, at all events, discomfort, and hence his want of doing as well as his comrades.

Horses with straight shoulders mostly stand with their legs more or less under them; their being so, causes such horses to go with a tendency to leaning forwards, which, without any muscular exertion of the animal, throws a specific weight against the collar; the want of this must be made up by the oblique-shouldered horse by exertion of his powers: so he is actually at all times, unless going down-hill, undergoing more exertion than his less handsomely



made neighbour; he is, therefore, always doing more work than the other; so, unless he has the stronger constitution, the chances are, he will not keep in the same condition with the same work.

The description of country a Harness-horse is worked in, makes a wonderful difference to many; for instance, a horse with anything like a lengthened lounging trot works to great disadvantage in a hilly country; he does not take a carriage evenly and smoothly after him up-hill, but, to a certain degree, works it up as it were zig-zag—as if he first gave an impetus to one wheel, and then the other; this, to a certain extent, he actually does, as will be seen by the motion of his collar, which, instead of laying in a steady position, will be seen rocking from side to side on his neck, as the advance of each shoulder propels it; this not only renders his progression up-hill laborious, but is next to certain to cause galled shoulders. Going down hill is not only distressing to such a horse, but dangerous in the extreme. It will be seen that, from his elongated step, each time his foot reaches the ground it causes a considerable



shock to his whole frame, and the collar will be observed to be brought each time nearly to his nose by the draft of the pole-piece ; whereas on a short, quick-stepping horse, it will preserve a (nearly) fixed position, and keep a uniform pressure on the wither or rather top of the neck. It may be said, that a horse with the long step alluded to, may be driven with a false martingale to keep his collar down : he may ; but where this is constantly called into use it is very apt to gall ; a regular breeching is the only thing of real use to him ; this takes the shock off his neck, but it does not prevent his experiencing a severe one from the weight of his own body, and that propelled with, of course, additional force from his resistance to the descending carriage behind ; in fact, up hill or down, he works uncomfortably, and to disadvantage, and will not, therefore, keep in the same condition as a horse whose style of going fits him for hill work. Added to this, the long-stepping horse feels he does not go safely down hill, so he is in constant alarm when doing so : in fact, he has no business in such a country, though in a flat one he would probably be



a fast, lasting, and valuable Harness-horse. In single harness such a horse will work with equal disadvantage, excepting he will not feel the shock on his neck on going down hill ; but he will still have to resist the carriage, and the motion of that will be found most unpleasant to the driver ; and should such a goer make a blunder, broken shafts, broken knees, or some broken bone of horse or man is very likely to occur. Should such be the case, the driver might wish he had, on the score of condition, sold such a horse to go where he could work comfortably and safely.

Horses, like ourselves, have sometimes very singular whims and caprices, for which we cannot account. He cannot tell us why he may entertain such peculiar habit ; we should therefore do him the justice to hold it quite possible he has some reason, or rather feeling, that may induce him to do that unwillingly, which others readily perform. I have known men entertain a predilection for or against a peculiar act, who, though they could speak, could give no better reason for their peculiar feeling than “ they did not know



why, but they did feel it." Now I firmly believe that horses (of whom I entertain a much higher opinion, on the score of disposition, than I do of their lords and masters) seldom object to do any thing we require of them without some cause, that, if we could come at, would quite account for any unwillingness they may evince to the performance of any particular act.

A friend of mine bought a very clever single harness horse about two years since; he wanted him to work by the side of another, as a pair. He had no doubt of the horse going well and cheerfully; he did not, though; he would not pull an ounce to start a carriage, and when off, went as unpleasantly to the driver as it was quite clear he did to himself; nor did he get reconciled to it in the few times I drove him.

When purchased his condition was perfect both as to flesh and coat. I saw him six weeks afterwards, his coat stared, his skin stuck to him, his flesh was gone, and he looked jaded and dispirited, as no doubt he was. Not I am sure from want of care, but he



hated his work ; it was injudicious, not to say cruel, to keep him at it. He was a remarkably neat good single-harness horse spoiled. I heard he was sold twelve months since at Aldridge's, in wretched state, and with two broken knees. I now see him in a Hansom cab, in good condition, and showing, by his action and spirit, what he was. Thus was about seventy pounds knocked out of this horse's price in a few months, by keeping him at a purpose for which, for some reason, he was unfit. He lost condition, lost spirit ; no doubt while in that state lost action, and that accounts for the broken knees. His present work is doubtless hard ; but being fit for it, he keeps his condition.

It might be asked, why a perfectly good-tempered horse, accustomed to drag a pair of wheels by himself, should object to a light four-wheeled carriage, with a partner ? I cannot give the reason, but I would suggest several ; for instance, he might have been given too much work in double harness as a young one, and so have got disgusted with it : he might have been severely treated in his breaking, and



remembered it: he might have had his withers bruised by the collar, or have been frightened by a carriage overpowering him down hill: might have been worked with a lazy partner, so have had the chief work to do himself, or might have been annoyed or hurt by an unruly one. Any of those circumstances would readily and fairly excuse his dislike to double harness; and while there are plenty of horses adapted to every kind of harness, it is very bad judgment to put—or, at least, keep—a horse at any kind of work he dislikes. Even if it was sheer caprice, and we could ascertain it to be such, it would be better policy to indulge it, than to worry an animal out of his condition, in attempting the doubtful experiment of overcoming his peculiarity, let it arise from what cause it might.

We now come to the last class of Harness-horse I shall have occasion to mention—

### THE CART-HORSE.

“Most potent, grave, and reverend signors,” though you do not contribute to the show, splendour,



or amusement of the aristocracy, yet, as even royal mouths do condescend to the very plebeian ceremony of eating and drinking, and as you greatly conduce to the production of what royal mouths consume,—I must not have it thought I ought to pass you over in silence; for when in proper condition, we can, with far greater certainty of not being disappointed, calculate on your repaying us for our care than we can on the more valued and valuable Race-horse doing the same thing; for though you cannot make our fortune in a day, neither can you mar it in as brief space of time: your slow, but certain, efforts will, with a thrifty master to direct, add daily to his coffers; and if he performs his part in life as honestly as you do yours, perhaps, on an average, your joint efforts will produce greater blessings for posterity than does the votary for Derby honours, or the owner that directs, as he perhaps flatters himself he does, the movements of his precarious possession.

I know of no horse whose movements and habits have undergone no change by lapse of time or improvement, save one. I must not, in general terms,



mention the Cart-horse as being in his primitive state, for in the habits and treatment of many horses coming under such appellation, great changes have taken place; but the farmer's regular Plough and Cart-horse, whose labours are confined to the farm and its fields, has undergone no visible change; there he is, the same slow animal, and in about the same condition as, probably, was his progenitor centuries ago, who, as probably, "Ne'er had changed, or wished to change his place." He eats the same enormous quantity of food as has been consumed by the same class of animal, on the same farm, since a farm it was,—no stylish grooms offer him his stipulated supply of water from a pail—no little urchin of a riding boy is here to count the "go downs;"—no, the sturdy plough-boy sits whistling on Dobbin's back, while he takes from the accustomed pond his unmeasured quantity of water, the only sign of the "enough" being, the animal lifting up his head, giving a lengthened sonorous sigh of satiety, and voluntarily turning to go home. No rubbing legs dry here. The walk from the pond to the stable has



shook off a portion of the water, the rest evaporates as it may, an hour or two sooner or later, as the quantity of hair on the legs permits. Can horses treated thus be in condition? may well be asked. Yes, they are, and many, nay, most of them in proper condition for Plough Horses; and, what may seem strange to a man not knowing the fact, chapped or cracked heels are more rarely seen in a well-regulated cart stable than in a coach, post, or job stable. Wet alone will not crack the heels, it is the external air and the wet that excoriates the skin. The skin of the leg of the Cart-horse is not exposed to the cold air, the hair protects it; cut that close, and then treat him the same as when the natural length of hair was left, and cracked heels, swelled legs, and probably grease would soon make their appearance. Besides this, talk of trimming a good-looking or well-tended Cart-horse's heels, the functionaries of his stable would be up in arms at the suggestion; they would hold it as great a profanation to take the hair from their horse's heels as would a Jew the depriving him of his beard, if he wore one.



We might very naturally expect the gross food, and large quantities of it, the Farmer's horse is allowed to consume, must be injurious to him; and when we add to that the enormous draughts of water he takes, one would suppose that broken wind must be the certain result of both combined. Such, however, is not found to be the case; it unquestionably would be so, if the animal was put to work for which his habits and state unfit him;—in fact, in such state, exertion of any fast sort would probably be death to him. The objectionable effects of large quantity, as food or drink, only show themselves in animals destined to quick movement. The cow, for instance, who will consume as much as two horses, is not injured by it, from being allowed to remain in a state of quietude. I have seen hundreds of broken-winded horses—I never saw but one broken-winded cow: this shows that it is not the precise state that an animal may be in, that is injurious to him; it only becomes so when the state and the use do not accord. I do not think defective wind—that is, wind defective in itself, when in a quiescent state—is more prevalent among Cart-



horses than among others: they are not clear enough in their wind for quick exertion, we know; but not being wanted for it, we do not want the condition that would enable them to perform it; and one thing I am quite certain of—where one Cart-horse becomes a roarer, we should find half-a-dozen Race-horses in such state. I do not recollect to have seen more than two or three Cart-horses roarers, though I have scores of Race-horses such.

I hope it will not be thought that I advocate large quantity of food or drink for man or beast: the taking such is far more the result of habit, than caused by its being found necessary or advantageous: the most that can be said of it is, that it may be indulged in, under certain circumstances, without producing seriously injurious effects. The very slowest of the Cart-horse, though he does well enough, treated as he usually is, would, I am satisfied, do even his slow task with greater ease to himself, if only fed and watered in something like moderation. He is, in ordinary cases, in *fair* condition for his task, treated as he is—but he certainly is not in the *best*; though,



perhaps, in as good as are the generality of horses belonging to the generality of men, for the work they are called on to perform.

It used to be held as impossible that the Cart-horse could live, if he was forced into a quickened mode of performing his duties; and most absurd was such opinion. Cart-horses can show very considerable activity, when they please to exhibit it for their own gratification; it is therefore quite fair to call upon them for a little of it for our advantage; and the more so, as it eventually is advantageous to them also.

The man must be no visionary sophist or theorist, but a sound logician, and possess wonderful powers of rhetoric, who could persuade a ploughman or ploughboy that he could walk as easily to himself in a more active gait, as in the slow laboured one he daily uses; and far more difficult would it be to persuade him that about half a pound of meat would do, instead of a pound and a half of bacon, for his meal. Still these are little facts that, after he has taken the Queen's money, means are found, without a



logical argument being used, to convince him of; and, after a field day in July, he is perfectly convinced that his farm condition would not have brought him through. It did for the Farm, but it would not do for the Line.

We will now look at a description of Cart-horse that has materially changed his habits and form during the last twenty years—this is the London horse. Brewers, distillers, and others, using the magnificent animals that really ornament our streets, now find these horses do their work better, and are better, for being fitted for, and accustomed to, the doing their work in quicker time. Full of flesh—nay, fat—these horses are, and always will be, for several reasons: their work is not fast enough to keep fat down; their owners like to see them so, for appearance sake; and their men, with a laudable, though perhaps mistaken, pride will have them so; and again, where great weight has to be propelled, though there is no real strength in a mass of flesh, there is weight, and that weight thrown against the collar, is equal, in propelling force, to as much exer-



tion on the part of the animal as he would have to use to make up for its loss, if, like the galloping horse, he was drawn fine. Fat does not much impede activity, for short continuance; at least, not so much as its appearance might lead us to suppose it would. We have some fat men first-rate cricketers. I know a dancing-master of considerable celebrity; he is about five feet five or six, and walks an honest fifteen stone. He probably would not much relish "Sir Roger de Coverley" as a half-hour's wind-up of the evening; but he walks a quadrille elegantly, trots a polka as lightly as any man, and in a gallop I assure my reader he is really a capital goer.

But though we see the present London Cart-horse even fat, we do not see him the great swag-bellied animal he formerly was; carters, with better taste than they formerly had, now like to see their horses show activity, give a playful jump, and set off in a trot, at the crack of the whip. They have found that to enable their horses to do this, the state of the cow, as to shape, won't do: they get them into something like form, and many are handsome and



round in their carcasses, though still high in flesh: they are, in fact, in condition,—a thing formerly never thought of for such animals.

There is a smaller sort of dwarf Cart-horse, now much used by railway carriers: these horses do most of their work in a trot. Many Belgic horses are used for this work, as they are usually more active than our Cart-horses have hitherto been. These lighter horses draw great weights; but the London streets now enable them to trot six miles an hour with the same weight behind them that formerly they only walked with, and that at a very slow pace; but, Cart-horses as these are, they could not perform their duties if they were treated as is Dobbin on the farm. They are not, like him, allowed to swill water at a pond till the dimensions of the abdomen can contain no more: if they were (though treated as they are, they could not take a chariot to a flower-show at Chiswick), they would not be able to trot from the Euston Square terminus to Oxford Street; or if they did, would give you such audible indications of ponds and green clover as could not be misunderstood. Cart-



horses now really require something bordering on clearness of wind; for though, when we allude to wind, the thought naturally turns to the gallop, it must be recollected any strong exertion calls upon the wind; and trotting, or even walking fast, with a heavy weight to drag, calls very forcibly on it; if it did not, a broken-winded horse would do such work nearly as well as a sound one, which is by no means the case.

I have endeavoured to show by the foregoing sheets that so important is proper condition, that from the want of it, the best of horses become but middling performers, and moderate horses all but useless. proper condition is, in fact, vitality to the animal, where exertion is required. I will venture to make a stronger assertion in favour of it, which is this:—

Let me pick a cheerfully-disposed donkey, and allow me to get him in such wind and condition as I consider necessary, and he shall in a gallop match beat a very fair pony, if the latter is not in proper condition for the performance.

Let us now consider what are the indications by



which a man is to judge whether his horse is in condition or not.

First, then, most horses (though there are exceptions), if in proper condition, will look so—that is, will be in proper state as to flesh and coat. If this is the case, and the horse is found to do the work he is wanted to perform without fatigue, or showing any distress, or rather failure as to wind, such horse we may be pretty sure is in proper condition for his work, though, perhaps, by no means so for other exertion. Nor is it necessary he should be; he certainly should be in such state as would enable him to do much more than he is usually called on to perform, otherwise I hold he would not do that pleasantly, and this is being what is termed “above his work,” which every horse should be.

We will now look to the prevalent symptoms of a horse being out of condition; these are, exhibiting a wasted form; or, on the other hand, being over fat, shewing a want of spirit and energy while performing his duties, and wanting appetite during or after it; a staring coat, and often, as its accompaniment, being

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hide-bound, feverish symptoms, general debility, with or without swelling of the legs.

The moment we perceive any of such circumstances, we may be quite certain want of proper condition is the cause ; and the moment we perceive anything is wrong, in whatever we have or do, the first step should be to alter it ; what that alteration should be, must, of course, depend on the nature of the failing. Horses do not usually go wrong without some obvious cause ; if too thin, they are either ill, are over-worked, or under-fed. It matters not if a horse does but moderate work, if he is, from being a weak one or a bad one, unequal to the task, he is over-worked *for him* ; his being so may arise from not being suited to the particular work, slight though it may be ; but if from any cause the work is more than he can bear, if it is only a mile a day, he must go less, be sold, or be out of condition. If he is too fat, and becomes either troublesome, or indolent and sluggish (and fat will often produce the one as much as the other), he is either over-fed or under-worked ; judgment must point out which cause it proceeds from ; and whether



he goes twenty miles a day or one—eats a peck and a half of oats per day, or one quartern—the work must be increased, or the quantity of food diminished, whichever good sense points out as the most sensible alternative.

Thus much as regards spirits and flesh; now for the look of the coat in point of health. A horse may be in perfect health with a long coat on him, as well as with a short one, for the one or the other is often natural to particular horses, but the want of a glossy coat, or exhibiting a staring one, is a sure indicative of wanting condition, whatever may have brought it on; for this, what I shall call ordinary alteratives will frequently suffice, whether it be more corn, more warmth, less work, or more general care, and this must be accompanied by medicinal alteratives, if we mean to regenerate the system, which will be necessary before we can arrive at proper condition: hide-bound, so often attendant on impoverished frame, and staring coat, usually yield to proper feeding, mild physic, and then alteratives.

Swelled legs are much oftener attributed to over-



fulness of habit than, I think, experience warrants; I have more usually found this predisposition to arise from weakness. It may be said, and it is sometimes found to be so, that the legs would not swell so much with the horse at grass as in the stable; it is therefore inferred that stable-feeding causes the defect, in nine cases in ten; this is an error; the legs do not swell perhaps in some cases so much at grass as in the stable; this arises from the constant exercise the horse takes while at liberty; but bring him into the stable, and his legs will be found to swell far more after his grass-feeding than before. I have not had many horses subject to swelling of the legs, but such as I have had, I always found benefitted or cured by the very reverse of grass, namely, beans in addition to their oats, and tonics as medicine. Diuretics, that grooms are so fond of, will be found, in most cases, to aggravate the ailment. If the swelling is accompanied with great heat, and tension of parts, and more particularly by cracked heels, then mild aperients and fomentation is a good beginning; but where any flaccidity exists, stimulants and tonics I have found the sovereign remedy.



It will be seen that the intent of these sheets are, first, to inculcate the absolute necessity of proper condition in our horses; secondly, to show that the want of it often arises from causes that many "dreamt not of;" and last, though not least, to advise the reader never to let the want of condition exist a day, without taking steps to put it to rights. What such steps should be I have endeavoured to demonstrate, by pointing out probable causes; so lessening or doing away with such causes is, of course, the reasonable system to be adopted. If no apparent cause exists or strikes the owner of a horse as existing, a more critical eye or judgment will, probably, at once detect it; if not, we should be acting quite contrary to our own interest, and at the same time paying a very bad compliment to the number of well-educated men acting as veterinary surgeons, if we hesitated in seeking their assistance; and, whatever others may say or think of this little work, I am quite sure such professionals will say that if it may awaken in the minds of owners of horses a conviction of the all-importance of proper condition, that circumstance



alone will plead strongly in its favour, as being one among the numberless works of greater merit, that have had utility as the object of the authors in writing them.

THE END.



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